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A HOME WEEKLY FOR WINTER NIGHTS
AND SUMMER DAYS.

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No. 308.

CHANGE.

BY HENRI MONTGOMERY.

Once more as in the days of old
I trudge along the highway;
Again I tread the "cloth of gold"
That skirts the meadow by-way;
I climb the hill-side slope once more,
And 'neath the beeches yonder
Again as in the days of yore,
Headlong upon the grassy floor,
I fling me down and ponder.

Then down the old familiar way,
And through the summer weather
(Like we two in the younger day)
Go eye and thought together,
Down through the broken orchard bar,
Beneath the boughs low-bending,
And through the farm-yard gate ajar,
Till, where the porch and roses are,
They find their journey's ending.

My boyhood's home, ay, there it lies,
Half in the shadow hidden;
And oh, what hosts of memories
Come crowding up unbidden!
As, just as in the days of yore,
My eyes once more behold it:
The gabled roof with moss grown o'er,
The roses above the kitchen door,
That cling to and enfold it.

Yes, all the same—and yet not so;
The old familiar places
No more the merry voices know,
No more the once-loved faces.
The house is there, the home is dead;
Gone is the old-time gladness,
Since they that were its life are dead,
Joy is departed, and instead
The air is dumb with sadness.

Oh, tender hearts that to the last
Made home and hearthstone pleasant!
Oh, loving eyes that from the past
Look down upon the present!
Oh, ghosts of all the dear, dear days,
That constant flit before me:
Go not so soon your own sad ways,
Nor leave so quickly in your place
These new days frowning o'er me.

JACK RABBIT.

The Prairie Sport:

OR,
THE WOLF CHILDREN OF THE LLANO ESTACADO.

BY JOSEPH E. BADGER, JR.,
AUTHOR OF "OLD BULL'S-EYE," "YELLOW-
STONE JACK," "PACIFIC PETE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

A VISION OF BEAUTY.

THE day dawned bright and peaceful, the
skies were clear and cloudless. There was
nothing to remind one of the wild storm of
only a few hours before.

The morning sun shone upon a peculiar
scene. To the north and west uprose the wild,
rugged foothills of that vast chain, the Rocky
Mountains. Upon the east and south stretched
the broad sandy waste, now less even and
monotonous than before, since the fierce howling
blast had raised the surface in many a
curving sandhill, had hollowed out many a
miniature valley in order to form the winding,
intricate ridges of glistening sand.

At the base of these foothills now rests the
carpet of the buffalo-hunters, and their wild
guard, the Mad Chief's Pawnees. A minute
description of the spot is necessary to a per-
fect understanding of what is to follow.

Take a profile view of a statuette—Byron's,
for instance. Lay it down, with the nose
pointing north, the shoulders toward the east.
Build a towering wall of almost perpendicular
rocks around the skull, the face, down to
the neck. Then let them branch off irregu-
larly, leaving the shoulder of the statuette
to spread out for the desert. Draw a short,
crooked line from the point where the nose
ends. That line cuts through the bold rock-
walls, running in a zigzag course for a
few hundred yards, then ending abruptly;
a "pocket." Along its high sides are
scores of cracks and crevices, affording no-
table hiding places, as well as vantage points from
where a sturdy, well-armed man might hold
an army at defiance until hunger and thirst
overpowered him.

Though an unalarming inmate might be long
ignorant of the fact, escape from the circular
valley was impossible save by the one avenue
—the opening represented by the neck of the
statuette. In this circular valley, or basin,
the carts of the buffalo-hunters were drawn
up, their fires built, their skin tents pitched.
At the neck of the statuette were stationed
the Pawnees. To pass them without permis-
sion would be an impossibility.

It may seem strange that the buffalo-hun-
ters, bold, experienced men as they undoubt-
edly were, should allow themselves to be
placed in a trap like this, where they were
entirely at the mercy of an ally proverbially
treacherous; yet the explanation is simple.
The journey was finished in the darkness,
when the fierce howling of the tempest was
at its worst. Guided by the savages, they oc-
cupied the position indicated without the faintest
suspicion.

Jack Rabbit and his comrade, Tony Chew,
were standing side by side, half way between
the two camps. The features of the big
borderer were quiet and composed. Not a
trace remained of the deadly passions that
had so lately possessed him. With its accom-
plishment all thought of the horrible ven-
geance had died away.

The friends were conversing earnestly, the
one with his fingers, Jack Rabbit in low,
guarded tones.

"No, I don't like it, old man Tony. It may
be O. K., but it smells pesky fishy, anyhow.
There's a sulky, vicious devil in the old man's
eyes that means mischief. He knows that



The friends were conversing earnestly, the one with his fingers, Jack Rabbit in low, guarded tones.

there's a rich haul in those carts, and he
means to have it, on pretty much his own
terms, too."

"You may be right," signed Chew. "I
like him no better than you. But, to me it
seemed as though there was more than mere
covetousness in his eyes, though he is cunning
enough to hide his thoughts, too."

"Now, daddy," abruptly said Jack Rabbit,
after a brief pause, "don't you think I've
sailed long enough under secret orders? When
we took up this trail, you told me that more
than life depended upon our search. Yonder
is the train; now tell me what interest I
can have in those people? What are they to
me or I to them?"

"A little longer—the time is not ripe yet.
Only—remember this. If you see their lives
in danger risk your own to do them service,
as I shall. Perhaps I am wrong—perhaps it
is a false trail, though I have followed it for
years. But I tell you—Hut!"

The dumb speech was abruptly checked as
a quick footfall met their ears, and turning,
the comrades beheld the stately, white-haired
figure of the Mad Chief.

"A peaceful scene, gentlemen," he said, in a
pleasant tone, speaking remarkably pure
Spanish for one who claimed to be an Indian.
"Quite a contrast to our first meeting."

"Yes—peaceful enough," replied Jack, ab-
ruptly. "Secure, too. No one can enter this
basin without your consent—nor leave it, for
that matter."

The Mad Chief looked at him with a strange
expression in his eyes; but the young man
fairly conquered in the duel of eyes. Then,
in the same tone, the chief added:

"You brought no meat with you. I came
to ask you to be my guest. There are some
little matters I wish to ask your advice upon;
our plan for entertaining our friends, yonder,
in particular."

A slight gesture from Chew decided Jack
Rabbit, and he promptly accepted the invita-
tion. Together they passed over to the Paw-
nee camp, passing close beside two prostrate
figures, securely bound to a couple of bowls.

A quick glance passed between the two men.
The captives' garb was that of the Comanches,
yet they felt assured that one, at least, of the
number had not been among those who fought
by the wagon train.

"They are snakes, brought in by some of
my young men this morning," coldly observed
the Mad Chief.

"The youngest is one of those who escaped
at the barranca," muttered said the big borderer.
"He deserves a better fate than awaits him,
here."

"Wait—I have a plan," signed Jack Rab-
bit.

The chief saw these rapid signals, but evi-
dently could not read their meaning. Nor
did he allude to them in any way, but led his
guests into the tall, roomy lodge. A few
sharp words broke from his lips, and then a
slight, graceful figure brushed past the pale-
faces and left the lodge. Yet, rapid as was
the action, the keen eyes of the young hunter
saw enough to send his blood coursing rapidly
through his veins. It was as though an angel
of light had flitted before his eager gaze.

A plentiful supply of meat was smoking
upon a large wooden platter. The trio squat-
ted around this, and ate as yet hungry men
in the best of health can eat. Yet Jack Rab-
bit cast more than one curious glance toward
the lodge door. He was thinking far more of
the young woman—even in that brief glance

he had seen that she was more than ordinarily
beautiful—than of the words of the chieftain.

It would be tiresome to record his long,
somewhat prosy speech; the substance must
suffice.

He declared that it was not often that he
met so many dear friends at one time, but
since he had, they must not part company un-
til he had shown them how very dear they
were to his heart. For three days, all should
be joy and festivity; after that, they could
talk of business. The Pawnee braves would
exhibit some of their national sports, and then
would be glad to watch the pale-faces display
their accomplishments.

During this monologue, Jack Rabbit, using
the one hand that was hidden from the keen
eyes of the black chief, formed these words in
the sign language.

"You must help me save the Comanche
chief—reasons afterward; they are important.
You can leave in a few moments. I'll keep
him here until all is ready. Manage to cut
the lad's bonds; tell him to wait for the signal
—he will understand your signs. Then come
for me. I'll tell you the rest then."

Tony Chew mutely signified his readiness to
obey. Though so much older than Jack, the
young man was generally the leader. Then he
arose and left the lodge, trusting to Jack to
satisfy the chief.

His keen eye saw that the prisoners were
left alone. The Pawnees were generally busied
with gorging themselves. Tony believed that
he could effect the release unnoticed. Gliding
along, he suddenly dropped down behind a
point of rocks. Then, gliding stealthily over
the ground, keeping well covered, he finally
succeeded in reaching the bowlder to which
the young chief was bound. A quick sign of
amity, then his keen knife noiselessly severed
the rawhide thongs, only leaving one intact,
sufficient to keep the rest in place. This done,
he signaled for the chief to wait patiently for
his signal, at the same time slipping the knife
beneath his body, in easy reach of his hand.

Then, satisfied that his actions had been
unobserved, Tony stole away until at a safe
distance, after which he arose and returned to
the lodge, just in time to hear Jack Rabbit say:

"You have my promise to join in the sports,
only you must have a little time to practice
first. You can come or send some of your
braves out to take notes, if you wish."

The black chief's face lightened at these
words, and he quickly agreed. His evident
reluctance to letting the two men pass beyond
his lines strengthened Jack's suspicions that
evil was in his mind, that he meant bitter mis-
chief to the buffalo-hunters.

"Come, pard," he added aloud, "I've pro-
mised to show them some of our tricks in the
saddle, and as it wouldn't do for us to make a
botch of it, we'd better practice a little. We'll
get our horses and go outside."

These words were purposely spoken in En-
glish, as though not meant for the Mad Chief,
but from beneath the long eyelashes that
fringed his lids, Jack saw a quick, satisfied
smile steal over the chief's face. The bait
was swallowed. Whatever suspicions he might
have had were now lulled.

While saddling and bridling their animals,
now thoroughly rested from their hard day's
work, Jack unfolded the rest of his plan.

"You will go first. Stop close to the young
chief. Sign to him that the horse is for him.
When he seizes it, do you fall as if knocked
down. Leave the rest to me."

"But the horse?" signed Tony, with a du-
bious look.

"I'll bring it back—and you know mine is
the only four-legged animal that can do it. I
mean to recapture the red-skin. Never mind
why; here comes that old brute."

The Mad Chief came up and said that he
himself would ride out with them. Jack Rab-
bit quietly replied that he would wait till his
brother's horse was ready. Tony Chew, as
though not hearing the speech, led his big
horse along until close beside the captive Co-
manches, then paused as though to learn why
Jack was dallying; and as he glanced back he
made several hasty signs to the Comanche.

Quick as thought the last cord was severed,
and the young chief darted forward like an
arrow fresh from the bow, snatching the reins
from Tony's hand and leaping into the saddle.
As he dashed away with a wild, ringing yell
of exultation, the big borderer fell to the
ground in a heap, as though stricken sense-
less.

A yell of angry warning burst from the
Mad Chief's lips, but before any of the Paw-
nees could interfere, the Comanche had passed
the cordon of lodges, and was thundering away
over the desert, to all seeming free.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TIGER-HUNTER.

STILL brighter glowed those cruel eyes.
Low and soft, yet more terrible than would
have been an angry scream, because more
treacherous, came the musical purring of the
huge cat.

The young buffalo-hunter glanced through
the double sights, aiming between the twin
stars; but he hesitated to touch the trigger.
To fire and miss, or only wound the beast,
would be fatal. That instant his leap would
be made, and little could their puny strength
avail against the desert king.

Then the tiger's head flattened close to the
ground, and the loud purr deepened to a deadly,
menacing snarl. Another instant and its un-
erring leap would be made.

His finger was already touching the trigger,
when a dark figure suddenly alighted before
Pablo, as though it had dropped from the
leaves above. He started back with a little
cry of superstitious wonder. At the same in-
stant the snarl of the tiger rose to a wild yell,
and its long, lithe body shot through the air
direct for the spot where the strange figure
now stood guarding Rosina.

Had he flinched, as might easily have been
forgotten him, the maiden would have fallen
the first victim to those sharp claws and
gleaming teeth. But, sturdy and firm as
though a statue of bronze, the new-comer re-
ceived the shock. There was a dull, peculiar
thud, then, as though rebounding from a
stone wall, the tiger fell heavily back, a dozen
feet distant. And then, as if impelled by the
same power, the dark figure sprang upon the
snarling animal, and a confused struggle en-
sued, through which could be seen the rapid
flashing of a blood-dripping blade.

Confused, bewildered, the young cibolero
watched the terrible death-struggle without
once offering to interfere. The abrupt ap-
pearance of this man, who had so boldly taken
upon himself the struggle with the desert
scourge, for the instant rendered the youth
powerless, so great was his surprise, and be-
fore the first shock had died away the fight
was over. With a shrill, gurgling scream, the
tiger rolled over, dead, the long blade passing
entirely through its heart.

Was it the echo? that shrill, venomous
scream, roaring high above the mad howling
of the tempest?

The stranger sprang to his feet with a
sharp cry, still clutching the faithful wea-
pon that had disposed of one fierce an-
tagonist. The firelight gleamed redly upon
his face. Blood, either from his own or the
tiger's veins, possibly both, freely moistened
the lithe, half-nude figure. Yet he did not
flinch, did not seek to retreat, but stood above
the still quivering carcass, the model of a
wild, fearless gladiator.

Another cry, louder, sharper than before,
accompanied by the swishing and crackling of
undergrowth. Then a beautiful, though terri-
ble brute leaped out into the little glade. A
counterpart of the first tiger, this one was evi-
dently seeking its mate, aroused by that last
terrible cry.

As though bewildered by the bright glare of
the fire, the tiger crouched upon the ground,
its head flattened, its teeth shining through
the parted red lips, its long tail nervously
sweeping the ground as its yellow eyes
passed from one to the other of those silent
figures, finally resting upon the convulsed
shape of its mate, lying at the dark man's feet.

Its instinct seemed to single out the slayer,
and the lithe form flattened still nearer the
earth, every nerve and muscle straining for
the avenging leap.

The leap was made, but only through the
spasmodic relaxation of the strained sinews.
Sharp and spiteful rung out the report of
Pablo's rifle, and the leaden missile crashed
through the tiger's brain.

Springing lightly aside, the stranger dealt
the body a deadly stroke as it passed, the keen
blade severing skin, flesh and bones with ter-
rible effect. Quivering, yet senseless to all
pain, the carcass fell into the fire, scattering
the brands in every direction.

"It is needless," quietly uttered the stranger,
as Pablo sprang before Rosina, with drawn
knife. "The brute is dead, twice over."

"We owe you our lives, señor—"

"Look again, master," was the interrup-
tion, in a quiet, even tone. "I am only a
man—a poor Indian, without either name or
people. 'Lazy dog' sounds better than 'señor'
when we are spoken to."

"You are our friend, since you risked your
life in our defense," quickly interposed Ro-
sina.

"Thanks for the kind words, lady; but you,
too, mistake. I acted without thinking of you.
I would have assisted my worst enemy against
these devils. That is all I live for now. Day
and night I hunt them, and shall, until I die.
Why? Because they have robbed me of all
that made a life of slavery endurable—because
they killed my mother, my brother, my—my
wife. Bah! I am a fool! What interest can
you feel in my affairs? I only wonder that
you do not laugh—laugh and sneer at the idea
of a nameless slave and outcast prating of love
and revenge."

There was an indescribable bitterness in the
tiger-hunter's tone as he hissed forth the words,
that strangely impressed the young couple.
The language, too, was not such as might have
been expected from one belonging to that usu-
ally ignorant and degraded class, the "civilized
Indians" of New Mexico.

Whatever reply Pablo might have made was
cut short by a terrible, prolonged chorus, be-
ginning with the sharp barking yelp of the
coyote and ending in the wild, piercing
scream of the jaguar. Rosina instinctively
drew nearer her brother, clutching his arm
closely. The *tigero* laughed shortly.

"Listen! Is not that music to awaken a dead
man? You see now how it happens that we
met. The brutes come here for water, and for
shelter from such storms as this. I was lying
in wait for them when you came. Ha—again!
You shall see royal sport—"

"Let us go, brother," faltered Rosina. "I
am afraid—those terrible sounds chill my
blood."

The tiger-hunter started at the sound of her
voice, and as his eyes rested upon her pale face
the wild glow in his eyes gradually died away.
Slowly, as if reluctantly, he said:

"Your words are wise, lady. The storm-
devil was whispering in my ear, bidding me
slay—slay! But, life is longer than a day. I
have sacrificed, now I will save. Come; the
wind is carrying that," pointing to the char-
ring body of the last slain tiger, "for leagues,
and before day-dawn this clump of timber will
be a den of wild animals. Will you trust me?
See! I am calm now. I will guide you where-
ever you wish me."

Pablo did not hesitate long, but hurriedly
described the point where they had left the
train. In silence the tiger-hunter listened,
then grasped the bride-rein of Rosina's mustang,
striding swiftly away from the oasis,
gradually leaving behind them the increasing
howls, snarlings and yelps of the swiftly-gath-
ering wild beasts.

The wind was yet high, though the power
of the tempest had considerably abated. It
was with a certain secret satisfaction in the
confirmation of his own acuteness that Pablo
found the wind blowing against his right
shoulder as he strode along. And yet the
tiger-hunter was perfectly honest and sincere
in his belief that he was guiding them aright.
At least a point of rocks, especially when only
seen from a distance, can hardly be described
beyond the possibility of mistake.

And when the first gleam of day-dawn broke
upon the wearied wayfarers, a cry of satisfac-
tion broke from the young cibolero's lips. Be-
fore him, scarce a mile distant, could be seen
a point of rocks, jutting from a rugged mass
of evergreen-studded hills. The general out-
line, even some of the minor details, were true
to what the young man had described.

"But—where are they?" faltered Rosina, the old fear again assailing her heart, as she sought in vain for some traces of the expected train.

The tiger-hunter silently raised his head, and bent his ear. A peculiar, unmistakable sound came floating across the desert. Pablo laughed aloud.

"The carretas! Sweeter music I would not wish to hear, just now—oh, little sister!" Rosina made no audible reply, though her pale cheek flushed brightly and her eyes sparkled as she urged the jaded pongo on at a more rapid pace. Beside her trotted Pablo and the tiger-hunter.

The sound of the wooden wheels grew louder and more plain, and as the trio reached the point of rocks, the keen eyes of the tiger-hunter caught sight of the train, just appearing from out a narrow defile.

The glad smiles quickly vanished from Pablo's face, and a cry of disappointment parted his lips. The first glance told him there was something wrong. The train was not that for which they had been searching. He turned to Rosina with an uneasy look.

"They are whites, at least," she faltered; "so they must be friends. Perhaps they can explain—can give us some tidings of our—our friends."

"We have no choice, since they have seen us," muttered Pablo, as half a dozen horsemen suddenly rode out from the train, fully armed.

"Black Garote!" gasped Rosina, as the leading horseman drew near, a peculiar grin broadening upon his ill-featured face as he seemed to recognize the Raymons.

Pablo did not appear to share her uneasiness, and greeted the men frankly if not cordially, however proud and distant he might have been under other circumstances. At first the tiger-hunter held aloof, as though he meant to take his departure at once, but as though he interpreted aright the quick glance of Rosina's eye, he once more resumed his place at her rein.

Black Garote, the buffalo-hunter, was a half-breed Indian, though his features were more like those of a negro, and his hair was crisp and close curling. Very tall, with broad shoulders and powerful body, he was clumsily built; taken all in all, a more repulsive being could scarcely be imagined. His heart, too, was in keeping with his carcass.

Rosina bent low in the saddle and whispered to the tiger-hunter. She begged him to seek out her father and tell him where they were, repeating the half-breed's name, that he might know how to act.

"Do this, and I will pray for you, night and day!"

The tiger-hunter gently kissed her hand, then bowed and glided swiftly away. A sharp cry from Black Garote warned his men, and, as though all had been preconcerted, a terrible scene followed.

Three men galloped swiftly down upon the tiger-hunter, plying their stout bows with Indian-like dexterity. The attack was too sudden to be avoided. Without being given a chance to strike a return blow, the Indian fell, his body forming the sheath for a dozen arrows.

Garote dealt Pablo a brutal kick in the face that hurled the young chibolero bleeding and senseless to the ground, then grasped the reins of Rosina's horse, dashing her shriek of terror with his harsh, brutal laugh.

"You will not laugh and scorn me now, my dainty bird," he chuckled, as his brawny arms tightened round her waist, lifting her from the saddle and holding her helpless.

CHAPTER IX. THE WAGER OF BATTLE.

His shrill yell floated tauntingly back as the young chief of the Comanches dashed through the last line of the Pawnee lodges and thundered away over the desert, almost as his enemies realized what had occurred.

The Black Chief yelled forth his orders, even as he leaped toward his own half-saddled mustang, bidding his braves recapture the Comanche under peril of death. But hasty as they were, their efforts would have availed little against the big buckskin, and the Comanche might have laughed them to scorn, only for the young plainsman, by whom all this machinery had been put in motion.

With an agile bound he was in the saddle and then, uttering a single clear shout as he passed by the still prostrate borderman, he stretched out in swift pursuit of the big buckskin, whose mighty bounds, so long and powerful, were devouring the space with a rapidity that caused the bronze cheek of the rider to glow with proud surprise. Not only to escape, but to carry off this truly magnificent animal!

Then, with natural curiosity, he glanced back. He saw the Pawnee camp in wild confusion, a score of braves preparing their ponies for hot pursuit. A light cloud chased away the scornful smile, and the Comanche's brow lowered. It was not the preparations of the Pawnees that caused this. He knew right well that not one out of a hundred mustangs could cope successfully with the big States horse.

But that blood-bay, racing so level and true, with a long, sweeping stride, swift and regular as the action of a choice bit of machinery guileless of jar or friction; from that young man of whose prowess he had already been a witness—from him alone had he cause for fear. Yet, though armed only with the knife left him by the dumb borderer, the young chief resolved never to return alive.

With a steady hand Jack Rabbit regulated the speed of his horse, knowing to an iota what the two animals were capable of, and that he could end the race at his own will. So, patiently biding his time, he glided along in the rear of the yellow horse, casting an occasional glance backward.

At length, when nearly five miles had been traversed, when the Pawnee camp had disappeared from view and the Pawnee riders were steadily growing less and less in the distance, Jack Rabbit shook up the blood-bay, and the struggle fairly began.

The keen-eyed Comanche had, ere this, detected the truth—knew that he was being played with, and resolved to make a good fight, had carefully nursed his horse during the last mile or two. Now, as he felt the keen knife-point spurting his haunches, the yellow horse plunged forward with almost redoubled speed.

Jack Rabbit smiled grimly, and spoke to his horse. The blood-bay tossed its head, then stretched out still nearer the ground. More than once the two had been pitted against each other, nor was he to encounter defeat now, for the first time. Foot by foot, yard by yard the distance lessened, until the Comanche clutched the knife more tightly and nerved himself for a struggle. Yet he wondered why his pursuer did not make use of his rifle or pistol.

Steadily the blood-bay crept up, nearer and nearer, until, at length, Jack Rabbit spoke, in

the mongrel dialect, half Spanish, half Comanche, in general use among the *Comanche-ros*, or Indian traders.

"Let my red brother look back; a friend speaks to him. Look—my hands are empty, though the chief can see here fire-bows that hold more lives than he has fingers. There—would an enemy act so?"

As he spoke, Jack Rabbit checked his horse and dropped both revolvers and rifle to the ground, then folded his arms quietly. The Comanche wheeled his horse and rode back, a puzzled look upon his face. The whole affair was an enigma beyond his solving.

"Our tongues must be quick, for the Pawnee dogs are coming up. My tongue is straight and can only follow one trail; listen. Yesterday we were enemies, and fought each other. To-day we are friends, since I bade the silent man cut the things that bound a chief. Why did I do this? Some time you go back to these dogs, with me."

The Comanche drew back, mechanically fingering his knife. A cold smile played around the adventurer's lips, as he unsheathed his own blade, with the words:

"I have said it. My brother must go with me, if not willingly and alive, then dead. We are armed alike. Do your best, for this is not my first war-trail."

The Comanche rode forward, but the long knife was held by the blade, its haft presented to Jack Rabbit.

"Keoxa is a chief. He can not bite the hand that saved his life. He will go with the White Lightning."

"Good; I know my brother again. We will return to the Pawnee wolves; but listen. Your life belongs to me. Let the wolves snarl and yelp, but they dare not bite."

Jack Rabbit hid the knife belonging to Tony in his bosom, lest it should tell tales to some of the keen-eyed Pawnees, and then, side by side the strange allies rode back toward the now visible pursuers. Yelling exultantly, the Pawnees flocked around, but a significant gesture of the young borderer repelled the hands that would have rudely seized the Comanche. With dark looks, the Pawnees contented themselves with forming a cordon around the twain; and then the young chief returned.

The Mad Chief came forward to meet them, as Jack Rabbit halted without the line of lodges. But Tony Chew was ahead of him, and at a significant sign from Jack, he took his position on the other side of the Comanche.

"It is well," said the Pawnee leader, in a cold, measured tone; "the snake stole the wings of an eagle, but did not know how to use them."

"He used them so well that not one of your braves were within sight when I overtook him," bluntly retorted Jack.

"It is you whom he must thank for what awaits him, then—the stake, with all the tortures that my braves can devise," replied the chief, with a sneer, speaking in Spanish.

"It seems to me that I have a word or two to say about that," laughed Jack Rabbit, coolly. "An hour ago things were different, but now—I don't care about torturing my captive."

The Mad Chief seemed about to burst forth with some angry reply, and his clenched fist was partially raised to give the signal so eagerly watched for by his braves; but as he saw the quiet resolution of the whites, their hands resting upon those terrible death-dealing revolvers, he hesitated.

"You claim his life, then?" he said, at length.

"He is my captive; just what I shall do with him, I can't say, but he shall not be tortured, that's settled."

A tall, battle-scarred warrior pressed through the ranks and spoke a few words in an angry tone, so rapidly that Jack could not follow him. But a cruel smile that curled the chief's white mustache, told that the words were not unwelcome to his ear.

"It is well," he said loudly, glancing around the circle.

"Ynetli is a great brave, but he only asks justice. See! his face is black, because his lodge is full of mourning. A Comanche dog blew out the light of Ynetli's life, and the father mourns for his son. The young brave can not take up the weary trail alone—he must have a dog to run down his game, a slave to wait upon him. The child of the Snake must die."

Jack was about to speak, when the Comanche, who had evidently understood the Pawnee brave's speech, checked him.

"My brother is very kind, but Keoxa will send the father after his papoose." Then, in a louder voice, he declared his eagerness to abide by the result of the wager of battle. If he conquered, he was to go free; if not—wall!

Though Jack was plainly far from being satisfied, he felt that it would be impossible to obtain better terms. The wonder was that the Mad Chief had condescended to parley at all, when the power was so clearly in his own hands. Yet, as Jack compared the two men, he felt all his trouble and plotting had been for naught, so slight seemed the chances of the young Comanche. The one, slightly built, almost feminine in muscle and body, just in the prime of life, with muscles like whipcord and steel, his broad breast bearing the tokens of many a stoutly-contested fight.

Yet the Comanche appeared to have no fears of the result, calmly awaiting the preparations, by odds the coolest man among them all.

The preliminaries were brief and easily settled. The combatants were to fight on horseback—both Comanche and Pawnee are essentially horse-men—with knives, lances and lassos. Two mustangs were selected, stout, fresh animals. The men drew for first choice; a mounted brave started his pony from a point of rocks, galloping around in a semicircle, giving the rivals nearly five acres of ground on which to maneuver. The first who was forced across this line, at any point, must consider himself vanquished, and submit to his rival.

Fully repeating the conditions, the Mad Chief motioned his braves away. When they had stationed themselves at regular intervals around the half circle, he gave the signal. Carefully testing their mounts, the rivals gradually neared each other, lasso in one hand, lance in the other.

The Pawnee was the first to make an open attack, dashing impetuously forward as though about to ride down the Comanche, yelling and swinging his rawhide lasso round his head. Just keeping his pony in motion, ready for advance or retreat, Keoxa awaited the attack.

Eager as he was to avenge his son, Ynetli was not one to run an unnecessary risk, and his mustang veered to the right when just without lasso-cast, Keoxa facing him warily. His tactics caused the young plainsman's face to brighten, and to think better of his chances.

The Pawnee made one complete circle, then his patience gave way, just as Keoxa had hoped. With a wild yell, he dashed in, the black, snakelike coils flashing through the air. Quick as thought the Comanche was on guard. Wheeling around, his back to the foe, he drew the reins taut, his long spear resting between his mustang's ears and upon his own bowed head. The noose fell upon this, and was instantly flung off as Keoxa wheeled and became the assailant in turn; but with better success.

Ynetli attempted the same guard, but was too late. The noose closed around his body, and as his only hope, he dashed direct for the young chief, with leveled lance. Keoxa also spurred forward, with ready spear, and for a moment it seemed as though both must fall. But not so. Swaying lightly aside, Keoxa urged his pony on with a shrill cry. A sharp *pluck*—a dull thud—and the Pawnee was hurled senseless to the ground.

Handling his mustang with marvelous skill, Keoxa wheeled and paused over the quivering body, driving his spear through and through, pinning the corpse to the blood-stained sands. The next moment he was shaking the gory scalp above his head, pealing forth his triumphant war-cry.

The Pawnees seemed mad with rage and shame, dashing toward the victor with wild yells for blood. But swift as they were, others were swifter. Jack and Tony thundered forward and the Comanche, with drawn and cocked revolvers. A clear, ringing shout—a hoarse, deep growl answered the shrill, vengeful yells.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 306.)

Vials of Wrath: OR, THE GRAVE BETWEEN THEM.

BY MRS. MARY REED CROWELL,
AUTHOR OF "TWO GIRLS' LIVES," "LOVE-BLIND," "OATH BOUND," "BARBARA'S FATE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXVIII. A GLIMPSE OF ARCADY.

The ride from Union square to Fifth avenue, though short and accomplished in a very few minutes, was an eventful one to both Ethel Havelstock and Leslie Verne, who said very little to each other, being engrossed with their own thoughts, so entirely different in each instance.

Over Ethel had come a feeling of nervous anxiety, entirely different from the quiet satisfaction that had taken possession of her when Verne had first announced his intentions; and as the carriage stopped in front of a large, imposing house, and Verne sprang out to assist her to alight, Ethel felt her limbs tremble so that she could scarcely walk.

What if Leslie had overrated Mrs. Argelyne's need of such services as Ethel knew she could offer? What if some one else was in view for the position?

Leslie saw the sudden, anxious pallor that was all over her sweet, sad face; and actually smiled at it.

"I hope you are not nervous, Ethel! You need have no fears on the score of your reception—you will love aunt Helen as soon as you see her."

They ascended the flight of stone steps, after Leslie had discharged the carriage, and in a moment after the summons of the bell a tall, liveried footman opened the inner door of the large marble-floored vestibule.

Leslie nodded pleasantly.

"Will you tell Mrs. Argelyne I would like to see her again, alone, Waugh! If she will permit me to come to her room I would prefer it. This way, Ethel."

His easy, gentlemanly manners were so pleasant to the nervous, anxious girl; she followed him with a quick, willing step into a tiny reception-room on the right of the hall; a square room, with one large window fronting the avenue, that was hung with rich, yellow-brown satin, that matched the somber, elegant carpet on the floor, and the *tele-tele* and solitary chair.

In the center of the room was an upright card-basket, with bronze pedestal and silver receiver, that was nearly filled with cards—Leslie's the uppermost one.

"No one has been in since I left, I see. Now, Ethel, I want you to remain here a moment or so, while I see aunt Helen upstairs; will you, like a good, brave little woman? And keep this in mind—you are in your own home as much as you will be when I bring Mrs. Argelyne down to welcome you, and assure you of the fact."

A little smile, almost joyous, flitted over her face, as she looked at him with her earnest eyes.

"You must inspire me with your own sunshine, Leslie. And I want you to keep this in mind, that whether Mrs. Argelyne decides I am feasible for the vacancy or not, I shall thank you the same for your friendliness. Remember, Leslie, if the result be what you seem so sure it will not be, I know it will not be your fault."

Waugh entered the little room at that instant with a summons above, and as Leslie immediately went into the hall, Ethel had no opportunity to see the tender, pitiful, half-amused smile on his face.

He went silently up the velvet-piled stairs, and through the upper hall, wide, spacious and dim with softly-toned lights, into the room he had left so shortly before.

It was a large, front room, furnished most regally for Mrs. Argelyne's boudoir, and displayed to perfection both the lavish wealth and refined taste of the occupant.

A square room, whose lofty ceiling was tinted a sky-blue and studded with silver stars. The walls of the room were hung in lighter blue silk, fluted in large folds, edged with heavy silver fringe, to which corresponded the drapery of the three French windows. A white, velvet carpet, medallion, with center and corner pieces of blue morning glories, and border of silvery gray stars.

The boudoir set was upholstered part in blue velvet, with silver-gray puffs, part in bright gray satin, with blue silk up-trimmings.

Mrs. Argelyne's cottage piano, her pearl-mounted sewing-machine, her mosaic inlaid writing-desk, her exquisite library of choice volumes, her canaries, all served to make this apartment one of the most delightful in the house.

Just off the boudoir, to the right, opened her bedroom suite, the sleeping-room, in simple, unostentatious black walnut and marble, with white drapings of lace and linen, and a toilet set of snowy china; with a thick, milk-white Persian rug on the floor, and white lace curtains heavily draped over the inside shutters.

It was the very abode of peace and purity, and as Leslie tapped at the half-open boudoir door, and saw Mrs. Argelyne come out of the

darkened, quiet chamber, he thought that on her placid, intellectual face, the very seals of its peace and purity were set.

She met him with a quiet, tender smile, as he came in, a little nervously, and closed the door carefully behind him.

"Aunt Helen, can you spare me half an hour longer? I have something very important to tell you—something no one must hear but yourself."

"As long as you want me, Leslie. Sit in my big arm chair, and I will bring this rocker beside you so I may listen comfortably."

Her voice was very sweet, low, sympathetic, and full of womanly refinement; a voice that matched her pale, thin face, with its soft blue eyes and waving gray hair. She had such perfect hands, too, and they say hands are unerring indices of character. They were slender without being thin, tapering from the delicate, rounded wrist to well formed, straight-jointed, almond-nailed fingers—fair, firm, womanly hands, that one would have liked to grasp when dire trouble threatened.

She drew a low wicker rocking-chair close beside Leslie's knee, and laid one of her hands—the one with the wedding-ring on, on the arm of his chair, and looked questioning upon his flushed, eager, handsome face.

"It surely is something of importance. I do not remember having seen you so agitated for a long while."

She smiled assuringly, and her smile inspired such wonderful courage, and hope, and confidence.

"I am not sure that I know how to begin—I want to tell you all at once—she's down stairs waiting, and I want you to know most of all that I just worship her—oh, auntie, I'd die for her!"

His eyes were sparkling, his cheeks flushing, and he laid his hot palm on her hand in an eager pressure of beseeching earnestness.

Mrs. Argelyne raised her brows in a mute little inquiry of surprise.

"Who is here, my dear boy?"

Leslie laughed.

"I might take a premium for awkwardness, mightn't I? Let me commence again, and try to make you understand."

Then he began at the beginning—the days when he loved Ethel Mary! he won her fresh young heart; he told her with all the eloquence of love's agony, of the awful disappointment he underwent; how he never blamed his darling, but kept on loving her in silence and despair; how it had all ended—Ethel's pitiful widowhood, their Providential meeting, his own hopes, his never-ending love, her sweet, rare beauty, her matchless charms of mind and soul.

Then he told her what he told Ethel—of Mrs. Argelyne's need of a companion, and begged her, with all the eager ardor of a lover, to take his darling, and keep her where she would be happy, where he might see her when he chose, and watch the tokens of fading grief for her husband and win her for himself.

When he finished, standing before her in all the perfect beauty and strength of his young manhood, the tears were in Mrs. Argelyne's sweet eyes.

"I want to see her, Leslie. You would not love a girl so well if she were unworthy; and she cannot be anything but pure and sweet and lovely, to have thus inspired you. 'Ethel! What an exquisite name. And no mother or father, poor darling! and no husband—oh, Leslie!"

She pointed to her own black dress, the garb of widowhood she had worn for a half score of years, that she never intended to lay aside. From her chair in the reception room Ethel heard the two descending the stairs; nearer was a faint, sweet perfume of 'Cream Spray,' that always heralded Mrs. Argelyne, and then she arose, with the instinctive courtesy of a lady, and waited, in sweet, deprecating pride, the presentation.

To her surprise, Leslie did not speak a word. She caught a glimpse of his handsome, happy face, that made her heart throb with momentary certainty of his success; then the sweetest voice she had ever heard addressed her, as Mrs. Argelyne came swiftly, gracefully across the carpet to her.

"This is Ethel! My child, Leslie has enlisted all my heart's sympathies. I am his aunt Helen."

She extended her warm, clinging hands, and took one of Ethel's between them, and pressed them tenderly, while her eyes took in every atom of Ethel's rare beauty, and read at a glance her intelligence, refinement, culture. Ethel's lips quivered despite the smile Mrs. Argelyne's soulful welcome inspired.

"I am Ethel Havelstock—Mrs. Ethel Havelstock. Leslie has been so kind to me—and you—you are very kind to—"

Her sweet, brave voice suddenly faltered, and both Verne and Mrs. Argelyne saw her fighting back the tears from her glorious eyes.

"I have seen trouble myself, dear—that is all, and women's hearts ought to be very sympathetic. To-morrow you shall tell me all you will, because, if I can persuade you to remain with me, I assure you I shall try very hard. Is there any hope?"

She smiled so brightly that Ethel's heart fairly throbbed with content.

"May I stay? I know how different I must be from the young lady whom Leslie says married and left you—but, indeed, I will exert myself to the utmost to please you, if I may only try."

Her brown eyes were radiant with pleading; her whole countenance was a revelation of intensest earnestness, and as Mrs. Argelyne looked at her, she thought it was little wonder that Leslie Verne worshipped her. Her own arms ached to take the girl in their embrace, and hold her closely to her childish heart.

She turned to Leslie, quietly.

"Ethel is my protégée—from this moment. For your sake, boy, with your mother's eyes—for my darling dead Jo's sake—and none the less for your own sweet sake, Ethel, I ask you—may, beg you to be my friend, my companion, my daughter."

It seemed like a dream to the friendless, homeless, girl-widow. She listened intently, her golden head slightly bent to one side, in speechless surprise; her vivid red lips quivering with gratitude, her hands tightly clasped in the bewilderment of the moment.

Could it be possible—this sudden change from loneliness, utter companionlessness to such warmth of welcoming friendship, such tender solicitude?

She looked at Leslie with her eyes burning with tears; it was to him she owed it all. In one of her rare impulses, she walked rapidly to him, caught both his hands, and pressed them passionately to her throbbing lips.

"Oh, Leslie—can I ever repay you—can I ever do half enough for you for this?"

He fairly swayed under her ardent eagerness—this lover of hers who worshipped even the hem of her dress.

Mrs. Argelyne knew and pitied his embarrassment, momentary though it was, and with rare tact, relieved him.

"Leslie knows how to be a dear friend as well as a dear nephew. And that reminds me of one more favor, Ethel—call me aunt Helen. I haven't a niece in the world since Leslie's sister Aggie died."

A little flush reddened on Ethel's face when Mrs. Argelyne commenced; but the conclusion of the remark seemed to dissipate the vague, startling surprise.

"I will do whatever you wish, aunt Helen."

The name made Leslie's heart bound in mad ecstasy, but he made no sign, save a tender radiance that lighted his eyes, that Mrs. Argelyne saw and noted.

That night, after Leslie had gone and Mrs. Argelyne had taken Ethel to the rooms dedicated to her own private use, and kissed her a tender good-night, Ethel sat down, almost dazed with surprise, trying to accept the reality of her position. It was nearly incomprehensible to her—the fact of her being established in such elegance in the family of a lady of whom she never had heard twenty hours before.

She walked bewilderedly through her rooms—a delightful sitting-room, looking out on a well-kept flower-garden at the rear of the mansion, furnished in delicate pink silk and white lace, with a rose-tinted rug in the center of the polished inlaid floor; with great deep, soft-cushioned pink damask chairs, and a pair of short sofas, with warm, saphy aff-gahs in white and light-blue thrown over the backs; with all the accessories to comfort and luxurious enjoyment in form of foot-rests, books, flowers, writing material—even to a drop jet of gas over a little ebon-topped table, with its sea-shell pink porcelain shade.

It was all so much more elegant than anything she ever had seen or imagined, and yet, she was not awed by it, or oppressed. It seemed to her as if it were only what she had always been accustomed to.

But—was it really true that she was the forlorn woman who went into the restaurant on Union square, disheartened and discouraged, that selfsame day?

She went into her bedroom—dim from the lowered gas glowing through an opaque glass globe, and knelt beside the low, cottage bed—white as an angel's wing, from the high-carved headboard of rare, ivory-white wood, where a dove, with outspread wings, guarded the sleeper, to the thick, soft coverlet of satin damask.

She buried her face in her hands in silent, heartfelt thanksgiving to Him who had brought it all about; of whom she had besought succor in her darkest hour, and who had so wonderfully sent light into her darkness.

So her new, strange, beautiful life began—with loyal, genuine yearnings for her dear darling, it was true, but very content, continually wondering.

It was to be only a phase of her singular destiny; it was only a blessed refreshment for a while, ere the cruel relentlessness of her inevitable fate scourged her on and on through hottest fire again.

Only a respite—but Ethel did not know that.

CHAPTER XXIX. THE WIFE'S RESOLVE.

Ir Frank Havelstock noticed the pitiful, heart-weary pallor on Georgia's face as she sat at dinner, in all her calm, sweet dignity, filling her position with the courtesy of a high-bred hostess, the probabilities were that he drew his inferences pretty nearly the truth, knowing as he did, that Vinny had sent Georgia the threatening letter commanding her to meet him that night. Would she go or remain at home? He amused himself with speculations on the subject. To go, would be to play directly in his hand, because he intended to contrive some way to have Lexington learn of it, and at the same time to prevent him from knowing the whole truth.

To go, therefore, would be fatal to Georgia. To disappoint Vinny, by refusing the interview he requested, would be calling down on her head a storm of danger that he knew Georgia would prefer to avert; to remain, therefore, would be as fatal as to go. Consequently, of two evils, which would the harassed, tempest-tossed woman choose?

The very same thoughts were filling Georgia's mind, as she sat behind the coffee-urn, toying with her ortolan and occasionally, for appearances' sake, actually tasting her eggplant. If she had but known of the Mephistopheles who was eating of her salt; or if she had dreamed she was as a willow-witch in his relentless hands!

Should she go? She had asked herself over and over, until her head ached, and the words fairly buzzed in her ears. It was coming slowly to her—her decision; she must go this once, only this once, and use every effort in her power to buy Vinny off from his malicious intent. If only Lexington did not know the place of meeting—then, like an inspiration, came the determination to save both Lexington and herself—Lexington from learning who his hated rival was, herself from being followed to an interview which could do no good.

Her sudden, though subdued excitement, aroused all the suspicious attention of Havelstock; and when Georgia asked to be excused from waiting for Ida Wynne, he was as sure her reason was connected with Vinny as if she had told him.

She hastened to her own room, where the lights burned brightly, and her faithful maid awaited orders.

"Bring my desk, Amber, at once; and while I am writing a note, I want you to go for your boy, and bring him here. Tell him to say nothing to any one."

Amber acknowledged her commands by a respectful bow, and while she was on her commission, Georgia wrote a line, in pencil, in a hurried, trembling hand.

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her usual quiet prudence; then she busied herself in little attentions around the room, while Georgia's sobs smote piteously on the still air.

Then, she took a stool—a soft, velvet ottoman—and placed it where Georgia's feet might rest on it; she threw a gorgeous-hued sofa afghan over her—with such unobtrusive kindness and thoughtfulness, that Georgia sobbed afresh at the acts.

"You are the only friend I have left, Amber—good, dear, faithful Amber!"

The servant-woman silently smoothed her lustrous hair, with a gentle, magnetic touch, that was positive balm to the overburdened woman.

"Sometimes I think if you only knew all I endure—Amber, you have known me ever since I came to Tanglewood a bride. You know when—they took my baby out of your arms, Amber, to put it to nurse in the country; you never knew why that was done, did you? or, have you ceased to remember or care for my baby?"

She raised her bright, tear-pearled eyes, that were unduly radiant, to Amber's peaceful face.

"Forget little Miss Jessamine—my own little nursing! Mrs. Lexington, I would forget my own-born boy as soon!"

Georgia caught the deft, black hand in her own fevered fingers.

"I wouldn't wound you, my good old Amber; you have been too faithful, too true, these long, lonely years. I am yearning for somebody—oh! some one to listen to me, to pity me, to comfort me, to believe me! Amber! Amber! don't people go crazy sometimes from trouble?"

She threw off the afghan in an impulse of feverish excitement, and sprung to her feet in restless eagerness. Amber gave a quick, anxious look in her face.

"You can trust me—you know that; you know no one will trust you more freely than I will and do—even with that letter Philo took, against you."

She was so honest, so fearless, so truthful, this woman of forty, whom long association with Georgia had made a refined woman, had developed all her better nature.

Georgia's face paled, but her eyes never drooped as she met Amber's.

"Sit here, and let me tell you all—everything; I must speak, or I shall die."

Then and there, she made of Amber her sole confidante; she told her why Mr. Lexington had taken her baby Jessamine and given it to nurse to the woman who had let it die; she went on, in her pathetic, truthful story to the time when Lexington had left her all alone, for years and years; and how he returned; and the greeting she gave him; of her suspicions of Havelstock that were at times quieted by his perfect kindness and apparent honesty of purpose; of the frightful fact that Carleton Vincy was not dead, but came back to annoy and terrify her—that to him, after the meetings they had already had, the note was written that Philo had taken.

It did her infinite good—that unburdening herself to the faithful, discreet woman who had served her so many years, and Georgia felt a lightening of her gloomy skies when Amber laid her finger respectfully on her shoulder, as if to lend impressiveness to her reply.

"It will all come right one of these days, Mrs. Lexington, and you will be the happier—you and your husband—for these seas you have waded through. But if you will permit me a word of advice, it is this—be very careful of what you say or do before Miss Wynne or her lover—if you want to keep your secret. Miss Ida, innocently, I think, would babble to Mr. Frank, and he—he is a snake in the grass, Mrs. Lexington. His eyes are all I want to see to convince me."

Georgia shivered as Amber thus verified her own deepest convictions.

"I believe you; I would not have him dream of Carleton Vincy's existence for a thousand fortunes. But, tell me, Amber, am I not right to see him to-night and for my husband's sake seek to further avert the knowledge of Vincy's existence from coming to him?"

Amber's grave, serene face was turned toward the floor, in thoughtful decision, for which Georgia patiently waited. In a moment Amber lifted her eyes.

"I think you are right in making one more effort to induce Mr. Vincy to leave this locality, dangerous as the attempt might possibly be. But, when you consider that you may succeed, when you know, in your own heart, the motive that governs you—the end surely justifies the means. Let me help you, Mrs. Lexington. Let me be your tried, true servant, through dangers and difficulties."

The tears sprung afresh to Georgia's eyes, and she grasped the firm, sable hand that was waiting to lift her along.

"If you know how your calm, sensible courage comforted me! I accept your advice; I will depend entirely on you and I will come to you when I feel I need you."

It was a strange compact—this ally between the proud, high-bred woman, the envious wife of Theodore Lexington, the elegant hostess of Tanglewood, and the unknown, unadorned colored woman who, through years of faithfulness, and prudence and forethought, had proved herself worthy the friendship of the heart-sore woman who had not another friend in all the wide world.

A silence followed Georgia's words, while both were plunged in thought, broken by a low rap on the door, that Amber answered promptly, while Georgia, quaking with nervous, undefined fear, shrunk back to the lounge. It was, as Amber suspected, her son Philo, returned from his commission. She brought him inside the door, which she carefully closed.

"Well, my lad!"

Georgia raised on one elbow, in intent eagerness.

"I saw him, misses, and he laughed and said 'all right,' and gave me this for coming."

He displayed a twenty-five cent stamp, with an air of satisfaction.

"And no one saw you or stopped you?"

Georgia felt the hot blood rush to her face to thus be obliged to speak before the child.

"Nobody, ma'am."

"Give him some money, Amber—there are small bills in my portmanteau. You are a faithful boy, Philo. Now go—and speak of your errand to no one."

The instant the door closed on him Georgia sprung to her feet, excitedly.

"Now, Amber, help me at once. I have not a moment to spare. First, hand me my little safe, and then lay out my dark blue serge suit. Only be quick, Amber."

She took the little iron safe on her lap—it was too heavy for her to hold comfortably, but her limbs were trembling as she felt she could not stand.

"If money will buy him off he shall have no cause to complain," she said to herself, as she hurriedly counted out the crisp bills that were folded neatly away; there were rolls of tens and twenties, beside several heavy checks

that she had no need as yet for requiring to be cashed.

She took out five hundred dollars and made it into a neat packet; then, in another parcel, she put five hundred more, with her hot, trembling fingers.

"If five hundred dollars will not induce him to leave me, forever, surely a thousand will. A thousand dollars only to let me alone! And Theodore Lexington would give a hundred times that much if I was where he believes Vincy to be—under the sod!"

In silence she permitted Amber to change her dress, and then she slipped the rolls of money in the pocket.

"Get my blue waterproof, and after I am gone lock both doors and admit no one—not that there is any danger of any one's troubling me, only I wish it. If Ida comes tell her I am sick. I am, heart-sick, nearly unto death."

Her great, woeful eyes looked almost unnatural as she glanced from under the hood of her waterproof; her hands trembled as she essayed to open the door, that Amber instantly fastened behind her.

She went silently down the side flight of stairs—one that no one used except on such rare occasions that discovery was almost impossible; she opened the heavy oak door that was only fastened with a bolt, parted the vines of smilax that crept luxuriously across a trellis in front of the door, and hurried along in the dense shadow of the house, until she was completely out of reach of detection from any of the doors or windows. Then she took the lonely path, and in a moment entered the little kiosk that marked the entrance to the Willow Copse.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 298.)

Happy Harry, THE WILD BOY OF THE WOODS; OR, The Pirates of the Northern Lakes.

BY OLL COOMES,
AUTHOR OF "IDARO TOM," "DAKOTA DAN,"
"BOWIE-KNIFE BEN," "OLD HURRICANE,"
"HAWKEYE HARRY," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXIV.
A LUCKY SHOT.

HAPPY HARRY struggled as he never did before to escape the pursuing savages. There was no dodging them on the open water, as he could easily have done in the forest. Two miles or more separated him from the brig, and with the enemy but a short distance behind, he felt certain that nothing but the intervention of Providence could save him from being captured.

He was at home on the water, as well as on the land, and handled the paddle with all skill, but the pursuers had the advantage of him. They were in a six-oared barge that belonged to the brig-of-war—the same one in which Kirby Kale and a portion of the vessel's crew had escaped the trap set for them by the Americans.

The chase became one of fearful interest to both pursuers and pursued. The savages, ever and anon, uttered wild, terrific whoops calculated to strike terror to the fugitive's heart and paralyze his efforts. Belshazzar stood up in the rear of his master's boat, and barked fiercely at the pursuing foe. Now and then Harry glanced back over his shoulder to note the proximity of his pursuers, and when he saw how rapidly the distance between them was lessening, his hope deserted him. But his courage never flinched, and he pressed on with all his might and main.

Suddenly he hears a voice yell out:

"Stop! stop! you little wretch, or we will riddle you with bullets."

It was the voice of Kirby Kale, but the youth paid no attention to the peremptory demand. He kept boldly on—his exertions redoubled by the discovery that the villain Kale was one of his pursuers.

The enemy could have slain Harry, but they seemed so confident of capturing him alive that Kale forbore firing upon him. He had use for the boy, hence his desire that he be taken alive.

They finally ran clear of all the islands and stood out in plain view of the little war-vessel. But by this time the enemy were within a few rods of the young borderman, and Kale was screeching at the top of his lungs for him to stop and surrender, accompanying his demand with a threat. But this did not scare him at all. He pushed on until he saw that further efforts were useless, when he dropped his paddle, and rising to his feet, faced the enemy.

The next instant the prow of the swift-moving barge struck the canoe aft with a crash, splitting it almost in two. Both Happy Harry and his dog were precipitated into the water—both sinking from view. The dog soon rose to the surface and struck out for safety, unmolested by the savages, who were on the alert for the appearance of Harry. But, to their wonder and surprise, the youth did not appear. The moments wore away into minutes—the extreme limits for human endurance beneath the water had expired, and still no boy arose to the surface.

The disappointed victors searched the waters far and near, suspecting an attempt to escape by swimming under water and rising some distance away, but nowhere could they see a sign of the boy. Aside from the waves on the surface of the lake, the sea was still and the least object was visible for many rods around. Kale thought it impossible for Harry to have swam beneath the water beyond range of his vision; but to make certain of this, they began moving slowly outward in a circle, searching the water around them carefully. For half an hour they kept this up. Kale shook his head in a puzzled manner. He could not exactly understand the mystery of the lad's disappearance. Even if he had been drowned, the body should have risen to the surface at least three times before sinking for the last time.

The sudden scream of a cannon-bell, followed by the sullen boom of the gun, started them. They glanced away toward the brig and saw a cloud of smoke rising from her deck.

"By heavens!" cried Kale, "they've opened fire on us from the brig, and it seems there is some one aboard of her who can handle a gun. We've got to get out of this and let that boy go. If he has gone to the bottom of the lake, the probability is that the dispatches he got from the English spy are with him. And then, come to think, he'd be a fool to be packing them around with him, if he has any idea of their value to the American people. But we had better return and help search for the maidens, Bebeelah and the white girl."

"Hook! Mucky-wee-lee come!" suddenly exclaimed an Ottawa chief.

All looked away behind them, and to their surprise, discovered the invincible Billy Muck-

elwee coming around the island directly toward them in a small canoe. The man seemed to be exerting his utmost strength with the paddle, for the canoe fairly leaped through the water. The paddle rose and fell like the winnowing of a bird's wing. The water parted in great rolls on either side of the prow of the boat, while a line of frothy ripples marked the course behind for several rods.

"Something's wrong, red-skins," said Kirby Kale; "whenever you see Bill Muckelwee in a hurry, you may know something's up."

They rowed leisurely along toward him, and in a few minutes they came to, together.

"What's the matter, Bill?" questioned the officer, "are you running away?"

"Whew!" puffed the renegade, mopping the perspiration from his face with his sleeve—"gimme—breath, gol—dash—it—thunderation, gimme breath!" he panted.

"What ails you, man?" asked Kale again.

"Whew—dash it! what are you fellows paddlin' round here—for, like a passel of ninnypoos—whew! I found them gals, and if I'd a' had help they'd a' been in our possession now. But the dashed-on hussies yanked out a small shootin' iron each, and trustin' the pizen thing under my nose, solicited me to vacate my position in their canoe; and, gentlemen, I vacated in a dashed hurry. You may think me a coward by doin' so, but if you have been married, you know it is nothin' but bravado that'd a' kept me in the boat. I have been married, gentlemen, and I'll say right here that my wife has been married three times since we divorced, and every mother's boy of 'em sleeps 'neath the daisies to day. So you see, I know something 'bout female nacher. When a woman draws a pistol or a broom on you, and observes something 'bout your retiring from her presence, you might as well retire. It's no use whinin'; an argument in the shape of a pistol in a desperit woman's hand is conclusive, specially if she has the opposite side of the question. Dash take a woman, anyhow. They're the most necessary torture and bother that war ever inflicted on mankind. Any man'd be a dashed sight better off if he'd never seen a woman, and yet the dashed fools will be drawn toward the dod-dashed critters like as if they were a load-stone. As for me, gimme a catamount, or gimme death."

"Well, where are those girls now?" questioned Kale.

"I darsay they're aboard yonder brig—both of the dashed critters, red and white—wild-cat and painter."

Kirby Kale uttered a fearful oath.

"A pretty set of fools we're getting to be," he growled, savagely, "to let a boy have defeated us for a week right along. All this trouble—the loss of you brig and the escape of these captives, are all directly owing to that boy. And here we sit like a parcel of fools under the very muzzle of our own cannon in the hands of our enemy, both boy and girl lost."

"What boy you talkin' 'bout bein' lost, cap'n?" asked Muckelwee, a queer light flashing in his wicked eyes; "do you mean that dashed young Happy Harry divil?"

"Yes; we ran afoul of him awhile ago and smashed his canoe; he sprung out into the water and sunk, and to save our souls we can't find him dead or alive."

"Ho! ho! haw!" roared Muckelwee, slapping his knee and shaking his head in a paroxysm of merriment; "oh-ho, Lord dash it! if that arn't the best thing that I ever seed sence the mule kicked Mrs. Muckelwee into the middle of the followin' week. Can't find that boy? Ho, ho, dash my old peters, if that arn't the dee-lightfullest joke out!"

Why, Kirby Kale! that boy's within arm's rick of you this holy, sanctified minute. Just look over under the edge of your flaring old barge, and you'll see that owdacious young dare-devil coily tucked away under there!"

Captain Kale leaned over the edge of the boat and peered under its flaring sides; and to his wonder and surprise, beheld the object of his late search concealed there within half an arm's reach of him. In an instant the whole truth flashed through his mind: when the boy rose to the surface he came up directly under the projecting side of the canoe unseen, and had been there, clinging on like a barnacle while the savages were paddling around in search of him.

"Oh-ho! my young imp!" hissed Kale, "your cunning and deviltry are worthy of a better cause; but, young man, you—"

He did not finish the sentence, for a cannon ball from the brig came skimming along the surface of the lake and struck the barge a little forward, cutting its end squarely off, and shivering the canoe in which Muckelwee was standing to splinters. One savage was killed outright, and all others in the boats were instantly plunged into the cold water.

No attention was given to Happy Harry, the author of their troubles, but, side by side, all battled the element that threatened their very existence.

CHAPTER XXV.
THE GIANT'S STORY.

HAPPY HARRY experienced no difficulty in keeping afloat upon the waves. He seemed as familiar with the waves as with the intricate mazes of the woods. He turned upon his back and appeared to move along as easily as if propelled by the volition of his will rather than by physical exertion.

Muckelwee shouted and spouted as though he were drowning. He called for help at the top of his lungs. Harry laughed at him, his cap, boyish voice pealing forth his enjoyment of the other's predicament.

"Oh, great, Lord dash it!" the struggling renegade blubbered, "if I only could get hold of that young boy-divil I'd stain these waters with his blood—I'd squash him to thunder."

"Here I be," cried Harry, as he shot past the struggling villain, and kicked a sheet of water into his face, causing him to gasp for breath.

The man uttered a fearful oath as soon as he got his breath. It was all he could do toward avenging the insult. He had enough to do—in fact, more than he could successfully accomplish, to keep above water.

Happy Harry, however, never considering the possibility of the failure of his strength before he could reach land, amused himself among his struggling enemies in a manner that reminded one of the sparrow fighting the hawks. He glided to and fro among them, now dousing a red-skin's head under water, pulling his scalp-lock, or throwing himself upon a broad, upturned back.

Kirby Kale came in for a share of the youthful Leander's persecutions. Harry took a position in front of the English captain and kicked the water into a perfect foam around him, enveloping the captain's head in a torrent. Kale dared not open his mouth for fear of being strangled; he dare not attempt to seize the youth for fear he would have more than he could manage, and so he could do nothing but turn aside.

Thus matters lasted for some time when a succession of waves began rolling over the swimmers. They came down from the north-east. Harry glanced along the surface of the water, and to his joy and surprise saw the brig "Scout," bearing down upon them. On board he could distinguish the tall form and long, white whiskers of his giant friend, Long Beard.

The youth threw up his hand and shouted. A moment later he saw a boat lowered and six armed men, under Lieutenant Philip Reeder, put out toward him. Kale saw the enemy approaching but neither he nor Muckelwee attempted to get away. Captivity to them was better than drowning.

"Great, hoppin' hornits, lieutenant!" exclaimed Harry as the boat approached, "you are jist in time to help us folks out of this predicament. I like cool, moist atmosphere, but there's too much dampness here for me. That's friend Muckelwee who seems to be enjoying it hugely, and that's Cap. Kale and a few red Johnny-jump-ups that are playin' around like a school of whales; they are, for a sober fact."

The boat advanced and picked Harry up amid shouts of joy from the lips of the soldiers. Then Kirby Kale, Muckelwee and the savages were also picked up, when the boat headed for the brig.

Kale was sullen and morose, as were the Indians also. Muckelwee was cross as a sick bear. His tongue clashed almost incessantly, and he exhausted his vocabulary of anathemas upon the head of Happy Harry, ever and anon rounding off a peroration with a crack of his huge fist in the palm of his other hand.

"Birds' feathers droop when they get wet, don't they, Muckelwee?" replied Harry, with a smile, "but you'll be in a worse plight than this afore another day. You remember t'other night, when you betrayed a certain young Captain Rankin into savage clutches, and got us all into a slamm'n' big fight?"

"Curse the fates," growled the renegade. "I felt in hopes you had gone where that cursed Yankee cap'n went to."

"What was that, Muck?"

"To the devil," was the laconic reply.

"You're surely mistaken, else he didn't find you at home, for Captain Rankin is aboard your brig this holy minute; he is, for a straight-out fact."

Muckelwee glanced involuntarily toward the vessel, and a perceptible pallor overspread his countenance.

"It's a mortal fact, Huckelberry, and the captain's been whettn' his vengeance for several days, and I don't suppose a hundred men can prevent him from goin' through you like a dose of lead. I hate to see such a noble specimen of manhood demolished just to gratify a selfish vengeance."

"You dod-rotted little hypocrite! you'd like to see me exterminated," replied the renegade, furiously; "you tried to drown me, that I can prove, and I'll have you arrested for premeditated murder."

"I only doused a little water in your face to wash it; but the dirt on it is like the stain on your soul—can't wash it off; has to be burnt off with judgment fire."

Muckelwee fairly shivered at these words, that seemed strangely prophetic; then he ground his teeth and hissed a fearful malediction upon the head of the boy.

A few moments later they ran alongside the brig, and further words between the two enemies—the fight between the sparrow and the hawk—were prevented.

In a few minutes all were aboard the brig, the prisoners being confined in chains along with their confederates captured the previous night.

Happy Harry was rejoiced to meet Tempy aboard the brig, and happily surprised to be greeted by the proud carresses of his dog Belshazzar, who had been picked up by the brig a few minutes previous.

The youth became the recipient of innumerable thanks and commendations from those aboard the boat. To him was owing all their escapes from danger, and their success—in fact, their very lives were owing to him.

To his surprise as well as relief, the lad learned that Bebeelah had quitted the brig soon after having seen Tempy safely aboard.

By this time Captain Rankin was able to be about, and spent most of his time on deck. He and Tempy had a long chat alone, and when their interview ended it was with reluctance that they parted. Of course he had said nothing to her of his love. He desired that a longer acquaintance should develop each one's feelings more fully, as well as the general character of each.

And now that all were aboard the brig, Long Beard set sail for the nearest port of safety. The wind being favorable, they ran along rapidly toward the southwest.

Happy Harry moved about deck with his faithful dog at his heels, enjoying the sail and the cool breeze, and watching the foamy waters around the boat.

He was standing aft alone, his eyes bent downward on the seething track of the boat, when Long Beard approached him unseen, and laying his hand upon the lad's shoulder, said:

"My boy, what are you thinking about?"

"Great hornits, general! I'm thinkin' 'bout what a gol-slavin' time we've had the last two weeks. It's been right out of one trouble into another jist as fast as a feller could keep it up. I don't see how we ever got through, unless we were under the especial protection of heaven."

"We have, without a doubt, Harry," replied the giant, "and we should not forget to return our sincere thanks to our Great Protector. I have been persecuted all my life, and yet I daily receive blessing from on high."

"Yes, Big Beard, I know you have been a persecuted man. I always said so, and you said so too once—the night of the rumpus on the island. And I b'lieve you said you'd tell me all about it some time."

"Yes, I did, Harry; and since you have mistrusted something of the truth, and been such a friend, too, I want you to know for whom you have been running such perilous risks. My real name is Albert Hancourt, Earl of Hancourt, England. I belong to the best families of that country, Harry, and when a young man I loved Lady Emily Grafton, daughter of Lord Grafton, and she loved me. We were betrothed, when a rival came in for her hand, claiming it upon 'matters of state.' His name was Sir Thomas Kalsington. He was a reckless profligate, discarded by all society except his own class. He warned me that if I stood between him and Lady Emily what the consequences would be, and threatened that if I married her he would never cease to visit his persecutions upon me; and well has he kept his word. By one of the most ingenious pieces of chicanery known to the legal jurisprudence of England, I was disinherited of all my possessions. Then I was arrested for an offense of which I am as innocent as you are, Harry, but the penalty of which was death. By some technicalities in the legal proceedings, delay after delay of the trial ran

my arrest into four years imprisonment, during which time my wife, the fair Lady Emily, died of a broken heart. My daughter Margery was then a bright, accomplished girl of seventeen, and Tempy a mere child. And now, what next should the monster Kalsington do but go to Margery with falsehood in his mouth and represent to her that he held a power over the courts that could obtain her father's release on certain conditions—that of relationship with my family. He told her that he loved her, and that if she would marry him he would be empowered, under the laws, to defend her father.

"Margery loved her father and was willing to make any sacrifice for my release, but I would rather have seen her die, and myself executed, than see her wed that man. But, of course, she was shut off from all communication with me, and I knew nothing of what was going on. She married him, and for a year or so he made her believe he was working for my release, when, in fact, he was drawing the chains tighter. But when she found out his deception, she became desperate, and set to work herself to affect my liberty. Enlisting the sympathy of a number of Kalsington's servants, she went to the prison where I was confined, and forcing an entrance, effected my release. That same night we put to sea—Margery, Tempy, and I. We embarked in an open boat, and kept in the course of an American vessel, which Margery ascertained would leave for home on the following morning, in hopes of being picked up by it, and so we were. The crew of the vessel had not learned of my escape, nor the reward offered for my recapture, before leaving port, so we were carried safely over to America. That was three or four years ago, and during our voyage across the sea, we were hailed by a British cruiser which informed the American captain that he wished to search his vessel for British subjects, but the Americans having the pluck to refuse them the privilege of searching their vessel, and being able to stand up to their refusal, the Englishman went on, and we escaped. For some length of time this insult to American vessels continued, I will say, by the way, until it resulted in this very war."

"Well, the English government offered two thousand pounds reward for the arrest of the Earl of Hancourt and his two daughters. The same notice gave a description of us, the time we escaped, and in fact the minutest particulars. But, hidden away here among the lonely Pleiades Islands, we have lived in comparative peace and safety these years of exile. But now the serpent of evil has again entered my Eden."

"Gracious hornits! I b'lieve you, general; and I'll bet I can put my heel on that serpent's head."

"You can, without a doubt."

"I believe Kirby Kale is the snake."

"He is—he is Sir Thomas Kalsington."

"Your persecutor and the husband of Margery?"

"The same, Harry."

"Well, governor, it will be an easy matter to stop that villain's persecutions. Here's a rope—plenty of good, strong hemp, and there's the brig's yard-arm, that would make a splendid place to hang him to."

"Harry, I want nobody's blood upon my hands. Amid all my long sufferings I have done nothing evil, not even sought to avenge my wrongs, and I want to continue perfectly upright in the sight of God. Kale is a prisoner of war, and I shall turn him over to the American authorities and let them deal with him as they see fit."

"You are a magnanimous enemy, general," replied Harry; "if we'd fall out, I wouldn't be a bit afraid of you. But how does Margery feel toward Kale?"

"She despises him—will not speak to him."

"Good for her, say I. She serves him right. But, general, I drew a bead on that fellow to-day, and why in Sam Hill I didn't fire, I can't tell. I reckon Satan interfered. But if ever I get a good, lawful and justifiable excuse again, I'll shoot or die. I won't consult my conscience, either, I won't, for a stubborn fact."

"I presume he will be paroled or exchanged at once," said Long Beard; "then he will make known my whereabouts. But, as the two nations are at war now, there will be no international relations between them, and so I will seek the protection of the American flag."

"That's it, gove'nir, exactly—but, great, hoppin' hornits!"

"What now?" questioned the giant, surprised at the youth's sudden start.

"Gracious! I'd almost forgot my duty to my country. I have not delivered them dispatches taken from the English spy t'other mornin'; I haven't, for a disgraceful fact, general."

"True enough, Harry, but then you have been busy. Tell Colonel Miller when you see him, why you did not report at once. If nothing further happens us, you will be in plenty time with the dispatches."

"Just as soon as I land, I'm going to peg right out for headquarters; I am, for a straight fact. Then, general, I'm goin' to join the army. I'm goin' to raise a company of sharpshooters. I won't have but one boy in my company, and he'll be captain, lieutenant, and all the privates; and that honored gent will be Happy Harry. It's true I'm without a rifle now—little Brown Chick chirped his last and went under to-day—under the waters of St. Clair. But I'll have another 'ne just as good—I will for a fact of facts."

Here the conversation ended, and the two separated. Harry was soon after joined by Captain Rankin, who conversed with him some time. The young officer promised to report his heroic deeds to the commandant of that department, and recommend that he be given some testimonial of esteem for his bravery.

This promise pleased the youth very much, and seemed to inspire him with renewed courage.

The day wore away, and night came on apace, but long before morning dawn, the brig-of-war dropped anchor in the bay opposite their destination. A boat was sent ashore to

TRANSIENT JOYS.

BY L. C. GREENWOOD.

Transient as the clouds of summer
All my joys do stray from me,
Like the sweetness which a flower
Gives unto the transient bee:
So the sweetness—joy—my dower,
It remains and goes from me,
Transient as the clouds of summer.

Like the hurrying of a stream
All my gladness from me flows;
While it gives murmurs, I give sighs,
On my cheek grows pale the rose,
And sorrow's tears come to mine eyes
While each fairy vision goes
Like the hurrying of a stream.

Slow as clouds of winter vanish
Do my pains of sorrow go;
Darkening every smiling gleam,
Ever rests their gloomy shadow
Long like winter's frozen stream,
They not with the morrow go,
But like clouds of winter vanish.

A Loyal Heart.

BY JENNIE DAVIS BURTON.

"PAULINA RUSSELL LION!"

The fair cheek of Lionel Somers flushed visibly. He had a complexion like a woman's, but that was the only effeminate feature about him. For the rest, he was a good-looking young fellow with a golden beard and sunny-blue eyes, and an erect carriage to his six feet of stalwart manhood, and a simple honesty of nature which made him a favorite with men and women alike. It was that trait which first attracted Vint Rivers, himself *blase* at thirty, a cynic who found no good thing upon the earth. He took a liking to the young fellow, which was half pity for him. He thought that fresh, buoyant nature of his must lose by contact with the world, that he must find how hollow its pretensions were, and come at last to being artificial himself like all the rest of it. Lion answered that shocked exclamation in a tone half-defiant, half-deprecating.

"She is a lovely girl and a true artist. I will have gained the crowning blessing of my life; if I am denied that I will still be a better man, if a sadder one, for having known her. Oh, Vint! Vint Rivers!" passionately, "if you are as truly my friend as I have believed you, stand by me in this as I would stand by you if the case was reversed."

"But this is worse than I apprehended for you, Lion—that you have fallen a prey to that woman. Have you thought at all? Little need of asking. When did a man ever think where doing so might save him?"

"How bitter you are and how cruelly prejudiced! You do not know Paulina. When you see her you will understand better. She has the reputation of being as fatal as she is brilliant, as ambitious as she is heartless. She has talent of a high order and she has perverted it. She has shown what she can do in the more elevated fields of art, yet she devotes herself to portrait-painting, in which she does not excel. She is extortionate in her demands and miserly in her habits, in all except self-expenditure where her extravagance is notable. She is a woman whose name is in every man's mouth, whose very charms that have allured you are freely discussed in public places; places where the fairest reputation cannot be handled and escape untarnished."

"So it would seem since you have received such an impression. I repeat, you do not know her. I will not be angry if you will go to Mrs. St. Gerard's with me and be undeceived."

"My dear Lion, I renounced party-going along with other youthful follies ages ago." "But this is not an ordinary party, Vint; it is a gathering of celebrities among whom you will not be bored. I have faith in your discrimination; I want you to see her and tell me what I lack to make me more worthy of her regard."

"Is your case so bad as that? Then I will go, but I tell you, frankly, it is in the hope of disenchanted you. You deserve a better fate than to be lumbered among the victims of Paulina Russell; all the more a victim if you should chance to be a favored one."

I have said that Vint Rivers was *blase* at thirty, but he was also rich and had both tact and talent; so he was welcomed with *empressment* by Mrs. St. Gerard, who had a penchant for lions and was pleased to consider him one. Not that he had ever done anything to warrant that honorable supposition, but it was conceded that he might have attained greatness had he desired. Questioned by Miss Russell regarding him, the hostess gave that information as she asked and obtained permission to present him, and the gentleman, standing near, overheard.

"I do not claim recognition on my own merits," he said, smilingly, when the ceremony was over. "I trust Miss Russell may receive me better as Lionel's friend."

"As Lionel's friend I have been desirous of meeting Mr. Rivers."

The undue emphasis and the seeming frankness of that speech disconcerted him. Did she suspect with what motive that friendship had led to his seeking her? Her face gave no sign.

"Lion would esteem himself honored by your preference, and I am tempted to the first time to envy him. I might be tempted to rival him if I dared hope it would avail."

She gave a childishly petulant gesture, then laughed outright. "Pardon my rudeness," she said, "but I dislike platitudes, while compliments are only permissible where they are sincere."

"As Lion's are," he was provoked into saying.

"As Lion's are," she repeated, lifting a steady, it seemed a searching, glance to his face.

It was uncomfortable ground for Mr. Rivers.

"Do you know," said he, a little awkwardly, "I have both known and admired you—sincerely, Miss Russell—in 'Enchanting Distance'?"

Instantly her face softened.

"It is my best work," she said. "I like to think that I rendered the subject faithfully."

"You did. The one side of the mountain spur with its trees like waving ferns, its foaming, broken cascade and golden tints breaking the blue haze is deliciously suggestive of coolness and peace, while the travelers struggling up the other side, climbing almost perpendicular heights in the blinding heat, with flesh and clothing torn by the brambles, stumbling over reptiles and beset by clouds of gnats, make a strong contrast. They have overcome the distance and found the reality. I wonder," he said, abruptly, "that you ever abandoned landscape painting after making one such success."

"Because, like my travelers, I live in reality. They are gold-hunters, so am I. Fame

is a very pleasant thing in prospective, Mr. Rivers, but I prefer plenty in the present, and so work for money instead. Speaking of fame, has not Lion a promising future before him?"

"The future is always more promising than certain, I fancy."

"He has genius, he has application; and there is everything in concentrating one's thoughts upon a grand object. You, as his friend, should urge him to let no other consideration come between his heart and his work."

"No consideration?" asked Rivers, pointedly.

"None," said Miss Russell. Was this woman, who he had heard it said never spared a victim, really warning Lion through him to keep his thoughts free of her? Next moment he smiled at his own credulity. She knew him to be Lion's friend, and divined that his influence would be exerted against herself; this was a clever feint to disarm his opposition.

Mr. Rivers had come to Mrs. St. Gerard's for no other purpose than to study Miss Russell, and all his observations tended to confirm him in the opinion he had already formed of her. He gave it to Lion in rather uncomplimentary terms when the two met later in the evening.

"You are determined to do her injustice," said the latter, disappointedly.

"I fancy I could prove to you the justice of all I assert if I were so minded. Tell me, will this folly of yours stop at nothing short of seeking her as your wife?"

"I will win her as such if it be in my power."

"If she marries you it will be because no richer rival presents himself. Believe it or not, I could go in and cut you out myself if I chose."

"It is possible. Oh, I know I am not worthy such a prize," cried the love-smitten young fellow, in all humble sincerity. "And you, Rivers, you are a polished man of the world, and you have a heart in you, though you take so much trouble to convince yourself and others that you lack one. If you should fall in love with Paulina I should despair indeed."

"I fall in love with her," echoed Rivers, with a scornful laugh at that stupendous joke. "Your wits have gone wool-gathering, sure enough. Besides, love is not the thing which will prevail with your enchantress. I have more money than you have, and there lies my sole advantage. What do you say to my making the trial?"

"I have no power to prevent it; I wish I had," said Lion, moodily. "Heaven knows I have had no encouragement from her. If she were really what you think her, Vint, she would not seek to discourage me as she has done."

"The artifice of a clever woman. She knows you well enough to be sure that simulated indifference on her part will add fuel to your flame; and if, meantime, that richer party appears in the field, you will be the first to exonerate her for throwing you over in the end. She is astute; she does not lose the opportunity of making friends of her victims."

Lion was turning his back upon his friend in disgust, when his glance fell upon Miss Russell herself, standing near them. Rivers' hand touched his shoulder, and he looked smilingly into the young man's face.

"The situation does not require that expression of dismay. She is talking with Cadwalader, you see; she has not overheard us. And don't look so vexed, Lion. If I have spoken plainly, give me credit for good intentions. It is because I have your welfare at heart that I intend to test the stuff of which your enchantment is made. I would rather not see the mercenary coquette I think her to be for my friend's wife, and the event will prove if I have misjudged her."

It was in that way Vint Rivers first came to affect the society of Paulina Russell. He accepted invitations to places where there was a probability of meeting her; he contracted a habit of dropping in at her studio, where an elderly companion was always in attendance during her working hours, and, considering that he was sacrificing his inclinations upon the altar of friendship, he did it with an admirable grace.

She puzzled him. Brilliant, piquant, charming, he was forced to acknowledge her from the first; but studying beneath the surface which blinded and attracted the many, he met with contradictions he could not reconcile. There were times when she seemed all noble and gentle and womanly; and suddenly, when his prejudice would be unconsciously melting away, when his sympathy would be touched in spite of himself, she would startle and chill him by some hard worldliness, some evidence of that consuming love of money which those who were not under the glamour confidently declared ruled her life. That she was hard and keen in her business transactions he was well aware; that she had some deep secret anxiety that wore upon her he grew to understand.

He studied her with the purpose of saving his friend from a dangerous and designing woman, and in ways known best to himself, by dint of unobtrusive but searching inquiry, and constant watchfulness, he made certain discoveries which he flattered himself must outweigh Lion's impetuous fancy.

The first was that among all the people who were glad to receive her not one knew anything of Miss Russell's antecedents. Her genius and achievements in art had won the homage which is commanded by merit and success—most particularly by success. The current story was that she had resided abroad from the time of her childhood until two years before, when she had returned and taken up her residence in New York, and this accounted for the fact that her two domestics were foreigners who could not speak a word of English. She never received visitors in her own apartments; her studio was her reception-room also. It was said, moreover, that the sound of strange disturbances was known to proceed at strange times from those apartments, and a shrewd fellow-lodger in the house gave Mr. Rivers his confidential opinion that Miss Russell had the very devil of a temper; that he was morally certain from what he had chanced to overhear that she had found into a rage one night and beaten her maid, and the woman had a bruised cheek next day to show for it.

One day, when Rivers was giving an order to Vaux of the sample-room, a note was sent in which Max read, then turned to a subordinate:

"Send the usual quantity of Cognac, the genuine, mind! to No. 3009—street, at once. Stay, deliver it yourself and take the bill. That is a prime article, Mr. Rivers, and it should be. It is scarcely exaggerating to say it is precious as liquid gold."

His interlocutor made some casual reply, and walked away feeling almost stunned. 3009—street was Paulina's number; he knew the house and its inmates, and was convinced that the order had come from her. Lo! she was an inebriate. This explained much

which had puzzled him—her variable spirits, her haggardness at times, the mysterious disturbances, and the foreign domestics who could not gossip of the doings of their mistress were they so inclined.

But Lion, youthful hot-head that he was, refused absolutely to believe any evil of her.

"You have done your work as well as if your heart was in it," said he, bitterly. "But I am not convinced. From this time forth I shall follow the promptings of my own instinct, not your guidance," and was flinging himself out in a white fury when Rivers stopped him.

"Where are you going, mad boy?"

"To Paulina."

"For what purpose?"

"Come along and see if you like."

And the other went, discomfited and wondering, steeling himself for an encounter which he felt would not be a pleasant one. It was late in the day and the studio was closed, but Somers led the way straight to her house. The maid who came to the door shook her head and assured them in voluble French that her mistress could see nobody, but Somers strode past without heeding into the presence of Paulina herself, Rivers following close.

It was evident that Paulina had just entered; her wraps lay across a chair and she stood by the register, all the sparkling brilliancy gone out of her face and what seemed the shadow of some great sorrow or great care upon it. A startled cry broke from her lips at that unceremonious entrance, but Somers crossed the room impetuously and stood before her. He took both her unresisting hands in his, and looked straight into her dilated eyes.

"I love you," he said, with utter abruptness. "Will you marry me, Paulina?"

She seemed incapable for the moment of giving any reply, but she glanced across at Rivers in mute surprise.

"I am aware that my presence is unseasonable," said he. "It is due to certain discoveries I have made regarding you, Miss Russell, which I imparted to Lionel for a reason you can readily divine, but which he refuses to receive."

She found voice then to ask in a breathless way—"What discoveries?"

Something made Rivers pitiless. Was it jealousy of Lionel, standing there and holding her hands and trusting her in spite of all? In a half-dozen cruel sentences he told of his espionage and its result. Strangely enough the knowledge did not wither her. She flashed him a look of intensest scorn and replied cuttily:

"You have been engaged in an honorable enterprise, that of hunting an unfortunate woman down. It did not require this exhibition of manly spirit to spare me the danger of being won by—your fortune, Mr. Rivers. It is enough that I know you misjudge me; I have no vindication to make to you. And you, Lion, I will see again."

"Since it appears you overheard that unfortunate boast of mine made at Mrs. St. Gerard's," said Rivers, his voice quivering with anger, "I may be permitted to remind you that my avowed intention was not to win you, Miss Russell, but to save my friend. I must still believe that knowledge will have had its part in actuating the acceptance you will doubtless grant his suit."

"You are wrong," she said, steadily. "I may set your mind at rest on that score. I shall not accept him."

"Paulina!" This cry from Lion.

"It is true," she said, face and voice softening as she looked at him. "Mr. Rivers, stay! I have changed my mind. You shall both have the explanation which I meant to give Lion alone. You have accused me of being mercenary, addicted to drink, and possessed of a shamefully bad temper. Before I dispose of these accusations let me say that I can never accept Lionel, because I am already married. Oh, hush! let me tell you the whole terrible truth. I am married, and my husband is dead! It is true that I prize money and work hard for it, but it is to furnish him with the care and comforts he needs. He was always faithful and tender and loving to me; he sought me when I was poor and alone in the world and took me to his heart, gave me every advantage which wealth could procure, humored every whim of mine. He had never known stint, and when misfortune overtook him, when the knowledge of his ruin drove him mad, I could neither willfully abandon nor basely neglect him. The brandy, Mr. Rivers, is for him and used as a medicine. There are times when he is violent, and my poor maid who attends him suffers sometimes, but she loves me and serves me still."

"And you," cried Lion; "you too must suffer."

A spasm of pain crossed her countenance.

"I suffer, but I pray for strength to endure. He loves me and clings to me in his gentler moods; even when he is most violent I have the power to control and soothe him. I keep him with me, but I have concealed my marriage and my needs; I have feigned gayety and freedom, because in this way I could win greater returns for my work. I have submitted to admirers, because they were free with their golden favors and brought me the patronage I needed. But it was never my wish to win a man's honest love, least of all, yours, Lionel."

He turned from her with a sound like a strangled sob, and Vint Rivers, moved out of himself, penitent and remorseful, broke the pause.

"You could have the bond of marriage dissolved," he said.

"You do not know me if you think me capable of that. Ah, hark!"

There was a sudden commotion, a trampling of feet, and a sharp, terrified cry of "Madame! madame!" A deadly paleness overspread the face of Paulina.

"Remain here!" she said, and darted from the room. Rivers was impelled to follow her despite that injunction, fearing he knew not what. And the sight he saw was this:

In the staircase gallery above, a man with the frenzy of demoniac madness distorting what had been a handsome face, and Paulina beside him, her hands clasped over his arm, her steady eyes upon his in a gaze which seemed to cow and rule him.

"If you were false I would kill you," the rapid, wild voice was saying.

"But I am not false, Herbert. Look at me, love; you can always read the truth in my eyes, you know."

"Oh, but eyes lie sometimes. I will not look, I will—Aha! traitress, I know you now." His roving glance had rested for one instant upon Rivers, and a lurid fury lit his face. He turned upon her, and what followed never ceased to haunt Vint Rivers to his dying day. He saw her caught up and flung with all the strength of the madman; saw him snatch her again in his frenzy and dart away; saw him plunge headlong over the balustrade and fall

with a sickening thud on the marble floor of the hall beneath. He had broken his neck and was stone dead when they took him up; Paulina crushed and insensible, but still alive.

"I always feared this," said the physician who was summoned and who had been in her confidence. "I warned her of her danger; she fully realized it, but she was obstinate as only a woman could be. This is the result of sentimental nonsense and not having him in a straight-jacket."

"Will she die, doctor?"

"No power on earth can save her, I think."

Hearing that decision caused Vint Rivers the bitterest agony of his life. In the light of the new knowledge he had gained he did not now try to conceal from himself how he loved her—how he had loved her even when he believed her unworthy such love. Oh, what a history of trial and sorrow. Oh, the poor child! the noble, lovely, faithful woman—sacrificed!

But, despite the doctor's assertion she did not die. She lived, and in time rewarded Lionel Somers' loyal heart and generous faith. If Rivers sometimes suspects that he might have won the prize had he trusted her as well, he also knows that she is perfectly happy as Lionel's wife.

BEHEADING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

BY EDWARD JAMESON.

From forth the Tetrach's palace shone afar
The blazing lights, and floods of richest song
Were poured into the heavy air of night,
'Twas Hero's birthday, and his endless praise
Was sung and quaffed in flowing cups of wine.
All was revelry; and on every side
Were beautiful women, lavishing their smiles
On men distinguished at the battle's front.
Soul spoke to soul set free with mirth and wine,
And all were steeped in riotous delight.
Suddenly there came among them Salome
In ravishing attire of Eastern clime.
Enraptured with her faultless grace and skill,
In all the mazy rounds of giddy dance,
And taken with the spell of loveliness
That held her in its silken fetters bound,
In utter madness, Herod then cried out:
"Ask what thou wilt, and it is thine,
Yea, even to the gift of half my kingdom."

Salome paused, and each one held his breath
And wondered what her fancy would dictate.
Perchance 'twould be to gratify a lust
She dared not whisper in this royal court;
Or else to satisfy some slight caprice
Worth more than rubies to a maiden's heart.
While she delayed not knowing what to ask,
Her most unnatural mother bade her say:
"Give in a charger John the Baptist's head."

This said she to the king, who, much amazed,
And grieved, yet gave consent to her request.
And soon the Baptist's gory head is brought
And laid within her cruel, pitiless hands,
Belonging to a babe no harder than they.
Methinks I see this damsel tripping go
To her vile mother with the bleeding head,
Which, when alive, dared speak her sin and shame,
And now is dead to vile reproach and scorn.

'Tis said she much abused that saintly head,
And at it uttered many jokes and taunts,
And even slit its tongue with bodkin keen,
But never, till she drew her latest breath,
Could she blot out the image from her mind
Of that good man, whose searching eyes, though dead,
Seemed ever after to reveal her shame,
And show her better self how base and vile
Were all her bare deformities of soul.

Erminie:

THE GIPSY QUEEN'S VOW.

BY MRS. MAY AGNES FLEMING,
AUTHOR OF "THE DARK SECRET," "AN AW-
FUL MYSTERY," "VICTORIA," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

HOME FROM SEA.

"The dark-blue jacket that enfolds the sailor's
manly breast
Bears more of real honor than the star and er-
mine vest;
The title of fully in his head may wake the land-
man's
But Nature proudly owns him as her child of
sturdy worth."

"CLEAR the track! off we go! whip up old
lazybones there, and don't let him crawl on at
that snail's pace! That's more like; now for
it, at five knots an hour! It's pleasant to see
the old familiar faces again, after knocking
about in strange ports for half a dozen years—
don't you think so, messmate?" and the
speaker, a dashing, handsome, good-humored-
looking young fellow, with the unmistakable air
of a sailor about him, gave his fellow-passen-
ger, an elderly, cross-looking old gentleman,
who sat beside him on the roof of the stage-coach,
a confidential dig with his elbow, that nearly
pushed him, head-first, out of his seat.

"Lord bless my soul! young man, there's no
necessity for breaking a man's ribs about it—
is there?" said the old gentleman, snappishly.
"I dare say, it's all very nice, but you needn't
dislocate your neighbor's bones about it. Do
you belong to this place?" asked the old man,
after a short pause, during which his compan-
ion had politely apologized for the unnecessary
force of the blow in the ribs.

"Yes, sir," said the young man, with em-
phasis, "that I do! and in all my rambles
round the world, I never saw a place I liked
better! No place like home you know. Hur-
rah! for good old Judestown!"

"I wonder you go to sea, then," said the old
man, crossly; "you're a fool to do it, getting
drowned fifty times a day. I warrant you,
you are always on the spree whenever you get
on shore, like the rest of them, spending all
your money instead of putting it in the sav-
ings bank, as you ought to do, as a provision
for your old age."

"Me got on the spree?" said the sailor, draw-
ing himself up; "no, sir-ee. All my money
goes to provide bread and molasses for my
wife and family."

"Why, bless my soul and body!" exclaimed
the old gentleman, surveying his young com-
panion through his spectacles in utter surprise,
"you're surely not married yet, youngster?"

"Yes, I regret to say I am," said the young-
ster in question in a passive tone, "and got a
large family with large appetites to support.
It's melancholy to reflect upon, but it's true.
My wife keeps a billiard-saloon, and the chil-
dren keep apple-stands at the corner of the
streets, except my oldest daughter, and she's
at service. Fine family, sir! Halloa! here
we are, at the Judestown House, and there's
my old friend, Mrs. Gudge."

"Humph!" grunted the old gentleman,
doubtfully; "where are you from last, young
man?"

"Liverpool—ship 'Sea Nymph,' master,
Burlleigh; first mate, Randolph Lawless, Esq.,
late of Heath Hill. Had some distinguished
passengers out with us, too," said the young
man, tightening his belt.

"Humph!" again grunted the old man.
"Who were they, may I ask?"

"Certainly, you may ask, and I have great
pleasure in answering, the Earl and Countess
de Courcy, and their daughter, Lady Rita—
perhaps you're acquainted with them already,"

said the young man, with a wicked look in his
knowing eyes.

"No, sir, I'm not," snapped the old man,
"and, what's more, I don't want to be, either,
whether you believe it or not."

"Well, it's their loss then; that's all I have
to say about it. Here we are at anchor, at
last. Halloa, Mrs. Gudge! don't you know
me?" exclaimed the young man, springing
lightly from his lofty perch and alighting like
a cat on his feet.

"Why, Master Ranty! is this yourself?"
cried Mrs. Gudge, clasping her fat hands and
going off into a transport of delight, wonder-
ful to behold. "Dearie me! how glad I am!
how tall you are, and how brown, and hand-
some than ever, I declare!"

Our old friend, Ranty, laughed, and dashed
back his sun-browned locks off his happy,
thoughtless face, as he answered:

"I believe you, Mrs. Gudge; so handsome,
in fact, that they wanted to take away the Ap-
ollo Belvidere—a gentleman you are not ac-
quainted with, Mrs. Gudge—and put me in his
place. My modesty, of which I have at least
the full of a tar-bucket, would not permit me
to listen to such a proposal a moment. And
now, my dear madam, how are all my friends
at Heath Hill and Old Barrens?"

"First-rate!" replied Mrs. Gudge; "the
judge was here, not ten minutes ago, with that
big, rough fellow, with all the hair about his
face; Black Bart they call him."

"One of those notorious smugglers! whew!
I hope my excellent father is not taking to con-
traband courses in his latter days. What, in
the name of Amphytrite, could he want of
Black Bart?"

"Well, he said he wanted information about
the smugglers, and he sent my old man to look
for Bart."

"Humph! Set a fox to catch a fox! I wonder
how he succeeded. Seen our Pet, lately?"

"No, not since one day she dressed herself
in my Bobby's clothes, and drove young Mr.
Germaine and Miss Erminie over to the cot-
tage," said Mrs. Gudge, laughing.

"Dressed herself in Bob's clothes! what the
dickens did she do that for?"

"For fun, she said; none of us knew them
that day except her, and she drove them over
without their ever finding her out. Miss Pet
always is doing something out of the way, you
know, Master Ranty."

"And how is Mr. Germaine and Miss Erminie,
Mrs. Gudge?"

"Very well, indeed! Lor' bless me! you
would hardly know Mr. Ray; he's shot up like
a Maypole, and got one of them nasty mustar-
ches onto his upper lip. Of all the ugly things
they beats all. It actually makes my flesh
creep to see them eating or drinking with them
on. I'm glad you don't wear one, Master Ranty,
for of all the disgraceful things—"

Gudge paused, and rolled her eyes as if in
intense disgust, by way of filling up the hiatus.

"It's no merit of mine, I am afraid," said
Ranty, passing his hand over his lip; "I've
been mowing away for the last three years; but
owing to some mysterious dispensation of
Providence, or the barrenness of the soil, or
some other inscrutable reason, nothing can be
induced to sprout. I feel myself put upon by
Fate, I do so, Mrs. Gudge! There's Ray, now,
with whiskers, flourishing, no doubt, like a
green bay tree; and here am I, a young man
twice as deserving, with a face as smooth as a
sheet of foolscap. It's a damned shame, and I
won't put up with it, hanged if I do! Mrs.
Gudge, let me have a horse and wagon, or a
superannuated gander, or a go-cart, or some other
quadruped to take me home. Since I must
tear myself away, I may as well do it first as
last."

Mrs. Gudge opened the door, and called to
Bobby to bring round a horse; and soon after
that hopeful made his appearance, leading the
animal by the bridle. Ranty waved a good-by
to Mrs. Gudge, flung a handful of coppers to
her son, jumped into the saddle, and was off,
as Bob Gudge afterward expressed it, "like
Old Nick in a gale of wind."

Ranty's eyes lit up with pleasure as the old,
familiar scenes came once more in view.
There was the forest road, bringing back the
memory of the dangerous, practical joke they
had played on Pet. There was Dismal Hollow,
silent, grim, gloomy, and lonely—a fit habitation
for Miss Priscilla Toosytops. There was the
Barrens; there was the little white, vine-
shaded cottage; and yonder in the distance,
dazzling in its spotless paint, was the stately,
garish White Squall. There, too, was the
brown-scorched road leading through the pur-
ple bloom of the heath to his own ancestral
home of Heath Hill.

"Now to give them a surprise," said Ranty,
as he alighted at the little, cottage-gate and
approached the door; "wonder if Minnie will
know me; I hope she is in."

The parlor-door lay wide open, and he looked
in unobserved. It was the day on which
Judge Lawless had proposed, a few hours
later; and Erminie, whose gentle nature had
not quite recovered from the wound his threats
and harsh words had given her, sat alone with
the evening shadows

And all my friends have been quite well since I left, Erminie?"

"Yes, all. If you had arrived ten minutes sooner, you would have seen Pet. She has just gone."

"Well, I will shortly have that pleasure. How tall you have grown, and how you have changed since I saw you last, Erminie!"

He meant more the emphatic but undefinable change from childhood to womanhood, than that of her looks. Perhaps Erminie understood him, for she said, laughing:

"Not for the worse, I hope. You, too, have changed, Master Ranty."

"Well, not much, I think; I have grown five or six feet taller, and my complexion has become a genteel brown; but, otherwise, I am the same Ranty Lawless I went away."

"A little quieter, I should hope, for the peace and well-being of the community at large. Do you still retain the high opinion you had of yourself before you left?"

"Yes, slightly increased," said Ranty, who had now recovered all his customary nonchalance of manner. "There was a little lady out with us from England whose precious life I had the pleasure of saving; and with whose raven eyes and coal-black hair I would have fallen in love, but for the thought of a dear little blue-eyed fairy at home, who promised to wait for me until I could come back. Do you remember that promise, Erminie?"

"I only remember you were very absurd," said Erminie, laughing and blushing. "Don't talk nonsense; but tell me how you were so fortunate as to save the lady's life?"

"Well, one windy evening, a little before dark, this little Lady Rita, who by the way, though the laziest, sauciest young damsel I ever encountered, was quite courageous, came upon deck, and insisted on remaining there, in spite of all expostulations to the contrary. She was leaning over the side, and I was standing near, watching her, for want of something better to do, when the vessel gave a sudden lurch round. I heard a scream, and beheld the place where her little ladyship had lately stood vacant. I caught sight of her the next moment struggling in the waves; and, in a twinkling, I was in after her. Lady Rita, who had hitherto looked down upon me and all the rest of us with sublime hauteur and vestal prudery, made not the slightest objection to be caught in my arms now; on the contrary, she held on with an energy that nearly strangled me. A boat was lowered, and we were fished up, clinging to each other, as if bound to hold on to the last gasp. Lady Rita, according to the incomprehensible custom of the female sex in general, fainted dead the moment she found herself in safety. It's interesting to faint, and I was looking round for a nice place to follow her example; but upon second thoughts I concluded I wouldn't. There were no nice young ladies round who understood my case; and to be tickled with burnt feathers, and be drenched with cold water by a lot of sailors, was not to be thought of. Lady Rita was carried to the cabin; and a great fuss and commotion reigned there for the next two or three hours, while I was taking life easy, smoking a cigar on deck. Then the earl, her 'parient,' made his appearance, and completely deluged me with gratitude and thanks, which I stood like a hero, until the countess also came. Her tears and protestations of everlasting gratitude were a little too much, and I fled. I blush to say it, but I beat an inglorious retreat, for thanks are things one easily gets a surfeit of."

"Why, Ranty, you have sailed in high company lately," said Erminie; "earl and countess—dear me! I begin to feel quite an awe of you."

"So you ought; and I hope you'll continue to cherish the feeling. But, Erminie, do you know—though, as you have never seen him, it's likely you don't—but you have the most wonderful resemblance to Lord De Courcy I ever beheld in my life."

"Lord De Courcy?" exclaimed Erminie, growing pale as she remembered Keturah's fearful denunciations against all who bore that name.

"Yes, Lord and Lady De Courcy are at present in Washington City. The earl says he always felt a desire to visit this country; but, hitherto, circumstances prevented him. The countess is a lovely woman—one of the most beautiful, I think, I ever saw; and as good as she is beautiful, every one says."

"I have heard of her before," said Erminie, in a low, subdued tone. "Mr. Toospegs saw her many years ago, when he was in England. At least, I imagine it was her; for she was the wife of the old earl's son, and Mr. Toospegs says that since the death of his father he has been Lord De Courcy."

"Yes, so he has," said Ranty; "he was then Lord Villiers; but really, Minnie, your likeness to him is quite wonderful."

"Well, it is not unusual for strangers to resemble one another; though I suppose I ought to feel flattered by looking in the remotest degree like one so great and distinguished. How much I should like to see them both!" said Erminie, musingly. "I have heard so much about them from Mr. Toospegs, and—another, that my curiosity is quite excited. And their daughter—this Lady Rita—was that what you called her? By the way, Ranty, I never heard they had a daughter."

"Yes, they had two; the oldest died, I believe, when a child; and Lady Rita—well, some say she is not their daughter, but an adopted child. I don't know how that may be; though, certain it is, she does not look like either of them—not half so much as you do, Erminie. Both of them have very fair complexions, while Lady Rita is as dark as a creole. The countess, to be sure, has dark hair and eyes; but still her haughty little daughter does not resemble her in the least."

"Do they remain here long?" said Erminie, half musingly. "Oh, Ranty, how much I should like to see them!"

"Well, perhaps you may; in the overflowing of their gratitude, they made me promise to visit them en famille, while they remained; and if you'll only consent to keep your promise, and become Mrs. Lawless, why, you can come with me, and I know they will be delighted to welcome my wife."

"Nonsense, Ranty," said Erminie, a little impatiently, "how absurd you are! I am not to be accountable for your silly talk when we parted, I hope?"

"Well, all I have to say about it is, that there will be a case of 'breach of promise' up before the court one of these days, if you attempt to back out. Are you prepared to pay me five or six thousand dollars damages, as a plaster for my wounded feelings, may I ask, Miss Germaine?"

"As if your affections were worth one-tenth that sum, Mr. Lawless! Now, do be sensible, if you can, and tell me how long you are going to stay home."

"As to being sensible, Miss Germaine, I flatter myself I am that now; and my stay, or departure, must depend in a great measure on you."

"Now, Ranty, I shall get angry if you don't stop being so nonsensical!" said Erminie, flushing slightly. "I did hope going to sea would have put a little sense into your head; but I perceive it has had quite a contrary effect. I wish you could see Ray. These six years have made him as grave and thoughtful as a judge. I expect he will be quite famous in his profession yet."

"Well, I wish him joy of it," said Ranty. "But how any man can reconcile it to his conscience to be a lawyer, while honest, straightforward piracy is flourishing in the South Seas, and old-fashioned, upright brigands infest the Pyrenees, is beyond my comprehension! However, every one to their taste; and, luckily, this is a free country. Good-by, now, Miss Germaine. Fate and the approach of night compels me to be off; but you may look out for me an hour or so before day-dawn to-morrow."

And Ranty got up, shook hands with Erminie, mounted his horse, and rode off.

"Now Ranty Lawless," said that gentleman to himself, when fairly on the road, "it's my private belief and impression that you are falling in love, young man! What a sweet, artless, lovely face the girl has got, any way! And those eyes—those wistful, tender, violet eyes—how they do go through a fellow's vest-pattern, though! Ranty, my son, take care! Have you escaped the witchery of dark-eyed Spanish donas; the melting glances of Italy's raven-haired daughters; the enchantment of the little knobby-footed, aufron-skinned ladies of the Celestial Empire; the bedevilment of the free-and-easy mesdames of free-and-easy France, to be hooked the moment you land, by the blue eyes, golden hair, pearly skin, and pink cheeks of this little cottage-girl, Erminie! What will the governor say, I want to know! Well, it's time enough to think of that yet. No use worrying till the time comes. 'Care killed a cat,' they say; so, lest I should share in that unfortunate quadruped's fate, I shall take things easy. There's the White Squall. I think I shall go over and see my worthy uncle, the admiral."

So saying, Ranty rode rapidly in the direction of the flaring white mansion, and entered, without ceremony. The admiral, as usual, was alone in the parlor, and gave his nephew a boisterous welcome, shaking his hand as if he had hold of the handle of a pump, until Ranty winced and jerked it away. Then, having replied to the avalanche of questions with which the ancient mariner overwhelmed him, Ranty rose, and rode homeward, to surprise the household there.

Surprise the household he did—at least all of them to be found—which were only the servants. The judge was gone, and so was Pet.

"Why, Aunt Deb, Pet started for home nearly an hour ago," said Ranty, somewhat alarmed. "What can have become of her?"

"Lors! Mars'r Ranty, how de debil I know?" said Aunt Deb, who was given to profanity now and then. "Dar ain't no tellin' what dat ar little lady pokes herself. She might be at dem old Bar'n's, or she might be at Dismal Holler, or she might be gone to old Harry—"

"Old Harry!" interrupted Ranty, angrily. "What do you mean?"

"Why, ole Mars'r Harry Hateful; dar ain't no tellin' what she is!"

"Well, that's true enough. I wish she were here, however. Perhaps she won't be back to-night," said Ranty, walking up and down the room, and whistling a sea air.

Aunt Deb bustled out to prepare supper, to which meal our young sailor sat down alone, wondering, alternately, where Pet could be, and thinking of the wistful, violet eyes of Erminie. Then, when it was over, he took up a book, to beguile time, hoping still to see Pet; but when eleven o'clock struck, he gave up the idea of seeing her that night, and retired to bed, to dream of Erminie.

As he had partaken of the evening meal alone the evening before, so he was forced to sit *solo* at breakfast. Neither Pet nor the judge had returned, nor were any tidings to be obtained of their whereabouts; and, after breakfast, Ranty immediately rode over to the Barrens.

In the cottage he found Ray, who had just returned, who was receiving an account of Ranty's arrival from the lips of Erminie, when the entrance of that young gentleman himself cut it short. Warm and hearty was the greeting between the two friends; for never before had they loved each other better than did they.

"I suppose Pet was in perfect ecstasies of delight at your unexpected return," said Erminie, taking her work and sitting down on her low rocking-chair by the window.

"Pet! why the little gadabout never was at home at all last night; and where the deuce to find her, I don't know."

"Not at home!" said Erminie, in surprise. "Why, where can she be, then?"

"Well, Miss Germaine, that is just what I would feel very much obliged to you to tell me. It's very like looking for a needle in a haystack, I'm inclined to think, to go hunting for her. The best way is, to take things easy, and let her come home when she likes."

"Why, it is most singular," said Erminie. "I know she started for home, and took the road leading to Heath Hill. Perhaps she changed her mind, and went to the White Squall."

"No; that she didn't," said Ranty. "I was there last night after leaving her. The girl's bewitched; and perhaps she rode off on some Quixotic expedition by herself."

"She was on foot," said Erminie, now really growing alarmed. "Starlight was lame or something; so she started to walk home. Oh, Ranty! I am afraid that something has happened to her," she cried, looking up in terror.

"Oh, pooh, Ernie! What could happen to her between this and Heath Hill? Nonsense!" said Ranty, beginning to look uneasy.

"What hour did she leave here, Minnie?" asked Ray, his dark face paling slightly at the thought of danger to her.

"It was nearly dark, and she had to walk all alone over that lonesome heath. Oh, Ray! something must have happened to her!" cried Erminie, growing white with vague alarm.

"Why, what in Heaven's name could have happened to her?" asked Ranty, catching the infection of Erminie's fears. "No one has ever been molested on the heath."

"Those lawless smugglers are continually prowling around now; and it is very unsafe for a young girl to venture in such a lonely place, unprotected, after night. Good heavens! if she should have fallen into their hands!" cried Ray, starting up, in consternation.

"Oh, Ray! I hope not. Oh, Ray! do you really think she has?" exclaimed Erminie, clasping her hands in mortal terror.

"There is no telling. Some of that lawless gang are continually prowling about the woods, and shore, and heath, and if they saw Pet—Miss Lawless," he added, checking himself, and biting his lip—"they would make her a prisoner at once. There is no deed of violence too dark or dreadful for them to do. They

are something worse than smugglers, I more than suspect. This smuggling, I fancy, serves but as a cloak for the far worse crime of piracy. I have heard that their leader—Captain Reginald, they call him—is one of the most reckless and daring desperadoes that ever made general war under the black flag; and those of his crew that I have seen roving about here, look to be cut-throats, savage enough for anything, from wholesale murder downward. Great Heaven! if Petronilla should have fallen into their hands!" said Ray, pacing up and down in much agitation.

"But it cannot be, Ray; it is impossible, absurd, I tell you. Why, man, what could these buccaneers possibly want with Pet? A nice prize she would be for any one to take in tow!" said Ranty, getting alarmed in spite of himself.

"They might take her in the hope of obtaining a large ransom for her release, or they might—oh! the thought is too horrible to contemplate!" exclaimed Ray, almost fiercely.

"Ranty, why are we losing time here, when your sister may be in such danger? This is no time for idle talking. About! mount! and off in search of her! I will instantly follow!"

"Well, but wait a minute, Ray, before starting on this wild-goose chase," said Ranty. "How do we know that she is not safely housed in Dismal Hollow, or somewhere in Judgetown, all this time, while we are raving about pirates and abductors?"

"Oh, she is not! she is not!" cried Erminie, wringing her hands. "She started for Heath Hill, and had no intention of going anywhere else. Wild and daring as she is, she would not venture to walk alone through the forest after night. Oh, holy saints! what can have become of her?"

"We are losing time talking," said Ray, whose face was now perfectly colorless with contending emotions. "Mount, Ranty, and ride back to Heath Hill and the White Squall, and see if she has returned to either place since you left. I will go to Dismal Hollow and Judgetown, and search for her there. If she is to be found in neither of these places, then it must be too true that she has fallen into the hands of the smugglers."

Ranty, alarmed, but still incredulous, sprang on his horse and galloped rapidly in the direction of the White Squall, while Ray, at an equally rapid and excited pace, took the opposite road leading to Dismal Hollow. And Erminie, white with vague, nameless, but terrible apprehension, remained behind, to pace up and down the floor, wring her hands, and strain her eyes in anxious watching for their return.

Ranty was the first to return, with the alarming tidings that nothing had been heard of her at either place since. Nearly wild with terror now, Erminie continued her excited pace up and down the room, crying bitterly.

"Oh! I should not have let her go! I should not have let her go! I ought to have kept her all night. I knew it was dangerous crossing the heath, and I should not have let her attempt it alone. Oh, if Ray would only come!"

But another long, seemingly interminable hour passed before Ray made his appearance, and then he came dashing up, pale, wild and excited.

His eyes met Ranty's as he entered. That glance told all—both had failed.

"You have not found her?" said Ranty, hurriedly.

"No; but I heard enough to confirm my worst suspicions. Late yesterday afternoon, Orlando Toospegs says he saw one of the gang, a fellow called Black Rat, accompanied by some one else, he could not discern who, but doubtless another of the outlaws, take the forest-road leading this way. Pet has been waylaid and entrapped by them, there can be no doubt; for neither of them have been seen since."

Erminie dropped, like one suddenly stricken, into a seat, and hid her face in her hands. Brother and lover looked in each other's pale faces with an unspoken: "What next?"

(To be continued—commenced in No. 290.)

THE VOICES.

BY FRANK DAVES.

Across the dark a spirit came
With dusky wing and eye of flame;
And as I stood beside the sea
The spirit spoke thus unto me:

"Oh, man, a life of valor lead
Upon the field where heroes bleed,
And trumpet-blow, and banners fly,
And battle's thunder rends the sky."

The spirit vanished; and I heard
A voice like some lute-throated bird,
Which floated gently from the sea,
Across the night, and unto me:

"Oh, man, behold a flowery way
Where warm, bright suns will shine each day,
And birds will sing, and flowers bloom,
And life be a peaceful home."

Oh, shall I turn to left or right?
Ease shall I seek, or storm and fight?
Go shall I to some rural home?
Or shall I seek life's battle storm?

Nick Whiffles' Pet:

NED HAZEL, THE BOY TRAPPER.

BY CAPT. J. F. C. ADAMS.

PART II.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHAT NEXT?

"ANOTHER condemned difficulty," muttered Nick Whiffles, as, after thoroughly reconnoitering the camp, and crawling two-thirds of the way around it, he failed to discover any sign of Ned Mackintosh; "either me or him has got off the track. I'm sure it ain't me."

Still not suspecting that anything serious had occurred, Nick waited where he was expecting that his young friend would speedily put in an appearance.

"There allers seems to be some difficulty that a man's gettin' into," he continued, talking partly to himself and partly to Calamity, who was crouched down beside him. "The very first time I crossed that younker, he was in the greatest difficulty of his life, fur when a baby two or three years old starts out in a canoe, he needn't calculate on having a very easy time of it."

"I s'pose I had a good deal of the same difficulty when I was young; for I've heard my mother say I had all the diseases ever heard of, and some new ones that was never heard of. I was so short when I got the fever that it hadn't room to turn in me. The doctor that tended me was a fit doctor, and he didn't know nothin' 'bout anything else; so he allers made it a pint that I should be scared into fits afore he'd have anything to do with me, 'cause he said he was death on fits, and it was necessary I should go into 'em afore his medicines would do me any good."

"But I paid the old scamp off by giving him the whooping-cough, and it took such a hold of him that he coughed for six days without stopping, and then had a screw put on the top of his head to keep it on, but the thread didn't hold and that was the end of his career as a fit-doctor."

"Howsumever I got well myself, and a few days arter fell out the third story winder; but I struck on the head of a colored gentleman that was passing. He had a new hat on, and it jammed it down over his eyes, so there was another difficulty, es my old gentleman had to pay for that."

"Then the first time I went out swimming, I got catched in the current, went through the gates, and got under the wheel. I was purty tough in them days, and instead of getting mashed, I only got purty well squeezed; but it stopped the water-wheel, and took 'em a half-hour to get me out, and my father had to pay the men for the half-hour lost time."

"When I went to school, the teacher said I had an amazin' talent, but it was a talent for making fires—and that's what he set me at; but the second time I undertook it, the stove upset and set fire and burned down the building. Nobody ever found it out, howsumever, as no one beside me see'd it except the teacher, and he got burned up afore he could git out."

"So I got out of that difficulty very handsome, but only to tumble into another, fur when I was in St. Louis, some thief in the crowd finding himself hard chased, took the money out the pocket-book and slipped the pocket-book in my pocket, and then grabbed me by the collar, and yelled, *stop thief!*"

"That and some other things disgusted me with the settlements, and I struck out for the peraries and mountains."

"I was young in them days, and I hadn't been out here long afore I fell in love with a beautiful squaw, and spent a year in courtin' her from a distance, and then when I got a chance to come nearer, I see'd she was a big warrior, that slammed his tomahawk at my head, and that I had to soothe by lettin' daylight through his skull."

"Every man must have his difficulties, I s'pose. Here is Ned come all the way across the ocean to get the gal he loves and loves him, all 'cause there was a difficulty that wouldn't let 'em take her away with the rest of the family, and now when he comes all the way arter her, here's the condemned difficulty of all; we've got the critter, but here the varmints are all about us, and there's no tellin' when we're goin' to git her clear away."

"I send Ned out to make a rackynoisance and he agrees to meet me, and he don't do it—some little condemned difficulty is in the way; he's run outside of me, which, howsumever, is better than runnin' inside, and we've got to crawl around here in the dark for a good while afore we run afoul of each other."

"That's allers some difficulty fur a man to stumble over, or to stop him, but I s'pose if there wasn't he'd get to runnin' so fast that there'd be no stoppin' to him."

It was very evident from Nick's manner that he was not alarmed at the absence of his friend. He supposed that it had all resulted very naturally, and that they would soon find each other.

Nick was quite sleepy, too, but he was also so much accustomed to self-denial and privation that he easily staved off his creeping drowsiness. He was so far away from the fire that none of its light could possibly strike him, although he could plainly see the moving figures near by.

Calamity still crouched at side, and the trapper affectionately laid his arm over his neck, as a lover would have done.

"I order be kicked to be talkin' 'bout difficulties, when God has been so clever to me, and what amille is there that he ain't a blamed sight kinder to than he deserves? All through my difficulties he has took care of me: I'm healthy (specially at feedin' time), and the pup here still sticks by me."

"Then there's the Shagbark at home—one of the smartest animals that ever kicked a varmint over. Shagbark ain't had much of a hand in gettin' the gal out of the power of the varmints, 'cause we've had to use our canoes; but he's been gettin' fat, and will be ready to take the next trail with me. Me and Shagbark have seen some hard times together, and I've found his heels a purty handy thing when the reds kin down on us rather too heavy."

The fact of it was that, although Nick Whiffles was disposed to talk very much of his difficulties, he did not intend to do so in a complaining sense, but rather of his own amusement. He could not help feeling that he was under the greatest obligations to the Providence that had brought him through so many dangers to see his advanced age.

About this time Nick began to feel so much apprehension regarding his friend that he turned back and resumed his search.

Calamity may be that he finished his rackynoisance, and has gone back to court that gal," he muttered, believing such a thing possible, but hardly probable.

So he went over most of the ground that he had already trod over, taking a sort of zigzag course, but still without accomplishing anything toward finding his man.

So much time had now passed that he began to feel serious alarm, and finally he made the last resort.

"Calamity, I'm a little uneasy 'bout the lad; do you go and hunt for me."

The dog at once trotted off in the darkness, fully sensible of the duty that was required of him.

Back and forth and around he went, until finally he struck the scent, and he followed it as if he were a bloodhound.

The Indian that was stealing upon the sleeping figure of Ned Mackintosh had already drawn his knife, and had decided where to drive it home, when a slight rustling behind him caused him to turn his head.

As he did so, a huge dark body, like a cannon-ball on the ricochet, struck him with such violence as to throw him over and over, while the fangs of Calamity were fixed with such immovable fierceness in his throat that the red-skin, after a few spasmodic struggles, stretched out, dead.

It was all done with inconceivable quickness. The almost human foresight of the dog seemed to tell him that his human enemy would bury the gleaming knife in his body if only the opportunity was given, and so he crushed the life out of him at once and completely.

There was no outcry, but the flinging of the leaves so close to the head of Mackintosh aroused him, and he rose to a sitting position just as Calamity released his iron jaws from the throat of the Indian.

One glance and the young man understood all. He saw that the dog had rescued him from death—a fate incurred by his own remissness—and he impulsively threw his arms about the animal.

"God be thanked for sending you in time!" he exclaimed; "but for you I would not have been a living man this minute."

How came Calamity to be upon the spot at this opportune time?

A moment's reflection served to explain it to him. He had doubtless been sleeping on the ground for a long time, until the wearied Nick had sent Calamity to search for him.

"I am sorry I forgot myself, and gave the trapper all this anxiety," reflected Mackintosh, as he began cautiously retreating from his dangerous position; "but at the same time I am very glad I have been able to secure a good hour or two of slumber, for I needed it bad enough, and might have taken it at a time when it would have put the rest in more danger."

As he had no idea of the proper course to take to reach Nick Whiffles, he put himself under the guidance of Calamity, who, as a matter of course, speedily brought the two men together. Ned confessed to his falling asleep, and explained how the dog had discovered him just in time to save his life from the ferocious Blackfoot.

"The pup done the same thing for me once," replied Nick, who took it all as a matter of course; "it's just like him, just like him."

"What are you going to do when he dies?" asked Ned, looking admiringly at the brute. "I shouldn't consider myself safe a day, leading your life without him."

"I got him at the Selkirk settlement eight years ago, and I think he's good for several seasons yet; he got plenty relatives there, and I'll hunt 'em out when he keels over, and take some of his nephews or descendants."

"You will keep him till he pegs out with old age?"

"Onless he goes under afore; I expect, howsumever, that Calamity will be my dog when I git to heaven, for you can't make me believe that *sich* dogs hain't got souls like the rest of us."

Mackintosh had no wish to disturb the pleasant belief of the trapper, and so he let his assertion pass undisputed.

"How long do you suppose I have been sleeping?" he inquired.

"Well on to two hours; that is, if you dropped asleep purty soon arter you left here."

"That I did, and it has done me good; I sorely needed it."

"What did you larn 'bout the Indians?"

"Well, not much of anything, except that there are about a dozen hanging around the camp-fire—for what purpose I cannot imagine, and therefore cannot tell whether the indications are favorable or not."

"The sign is rather good," added Nick; "this is a sort of a camp, and ain't any trap set to catch us; we can pass around it without runnin' agin' a lot of the varmints at every step."

"Have you met with no adventure while I was sleeping?"

"None."

"You consider our chances pretty good for getting out the valley now?"

"Better than they war; you see, the varmints are off the track altogether, and don't know where to look for us."

"One of the signal-fires that we saw, you recollect, was on top of the very ridge over which we are to pass; consequently we may look for our enemies there."

"We may look for 'em everywhere," replied Nick; "that Red Bear isn't goin' to give up the chase so long as there is a show for 'em."

"I suppose Miona is looking for us."

"Yes; and time is precious, so we'll walk and talk."

The two men were so far away from the camp that they considered it safe to engage in a cautious conversation, without risk of being overheard by their enemies. At the same time neither was so reckless as to forget that there was danger all around, and that a misstep even might betray them.

Nick Whiffles was quite hopeful again. He and the others had been so hotly pursued, and were driven to the wall, as it were, so often, that there was a relief in the respite, which they now enjoyed.

Circling around so as to give the camp of the Blackfeet a wide berth, they rapidly approached the spot where they had left

which she had just left. Here she stood motionless and listened.

Was that the rustling of the wind that just then caught her ear? No, it was upon the ground, and while she was trying to still the beating of her heart, she distinctly heard the tread of some one upon the leaves!

Some wild animal, she concluded, was wandering near her, unconscious of her presence. "I will not stir, and he will pass by," she thought, as she endeavored to pierce the inky gloom about her.

But no; it was drawing near, and it was moving so stealthily that she was certain her presence was detected, and it intended to steal upon her.

Filled with alarm, Miona reached her hands upward to seek if there were any limbs upon which she could seize and draw herself up out of its reach.

No; there were none, and the creature was now within a few paces!

What should she do?

She had no weapons at all with her, she had left the deserted village in such haste that she had not once thought of bringing her rifle with her. She was helpless.

Then came the hope that she might frighten the animal into leaving her, and summoning her courage to the intense trial, she made a light spring toward it in the darkness, throwing up her outstretched arms, as she had seen Nick do with the bear, and shaking her blanket at the same time, and uttering an aspiration intended to startle the creature, whatever it was.

As she did so, she felt her arm gripped in such a manner that she knew at once that an Indian had seized it!

With a gasp of terror, Miona attempted to draw back and wrench herself free; but a giant could not have held her more securely.

"Heaven be merciful!" she prayed, struggling with the strength of desperation.

"Miona! my queen!"

She recognized that voice; it belonged to Red Bear!

Ay; the very being most dreaded upon earth had her now in his power!

Miona would have screamed, but her tongue seemed palsied; she attempted to speak, but could not! She was like one dead.

"My queen of the woods!" added Red Bear, in his native tongue. "I have sought you long, and with tears in my eyes; why did you flee from me?"

Her speech came back to her, but what should she say? What reply could she make?

What reason could she give? What was to be gained by attempting to bandy words with him who knew no reason or mercy?

Oh, if she had but a pistol, or even a knife! How she would fight for her freedom, never so dear to her as at this moment.

He used no violence, but, holding her with a grip that was painful, he led her forward into the path again.

A pang of hope shot through her frame. Where was Nick? Was it not time for him to return? Would he not be coming along this path in a few minutes? Would they not meet, and then she would be safe after all.

But no one else was encountered, nor did she hear any indication of the proximity of her friends.

"Why do they remain away? Have they, too, deserted me?" she wailed, in her anguish. "Is there no hope for me?"

The heavens seemed closed, indeed. As the dim moonlight fell upon her captor, she glanced askance at him. In the obscurity he seemed ten times more hideous and repulsive than ever before.

She did not dare to struggle or resist him. She knew what a fearful temper he possessed, and she wondered at his forbearance, in the face of the struggle she had already made, to flee from him.

Perhaps the exultation he felt in her captivity compensated him for all the labor he had undergone in the pursuit.

Whither would he take her? Back to the camp, where his companions were awaiting his return?

She had scarcely asked herself this question, when he left the path, taking the side opposite to the one by which they had entered it, and at that moment utter, hopeless, dead despair took possession of her.

Why struggle against fate? She was doomed to fall into his hands; the fond dreams that had cheered her for years were not to be realized; hope was all a mockery; there was no happiness for her; she was never to see that cherished mother again, nor the face of that father that had vanished as suddenly as he appeared before her.

Lead on, Red Bear," she murmured, hardly knowing what she said.

The triumphant young chief needed no such admonition, for he strode through the wood so rapidly, dragging her after him, that she could scarcely keep her feet.

She had no knowledge or thought of the direction she was pursuing, for it was nothing to her, and she did not seek to know. She only knew that she was the most wretched and suffering of mortals, and that the future was all a blank to her. The bright sky overhead held no moon or stars for her.

On, still on he led her, his grasp never relaxing, and stumbling forward, as though held in the power of some horrid nightmare.

When it seemed to her that she had been dragged forward for a mile (although it was less than one-eighth of that distance), she saw that they were nearing a camp-fire. She concluded at once that it was the main one, around which most of the party were gathered, but was somewhat surprised upon reaching it that no one else was near. They were still as much alone as though buried in the very depth of the forest.

Still the camp had been recently visited, for the fire was burning so brightly as to prove that it must have been replenished but a short time before. There was a heap of brush and fuel lying near, and gathering up an armful, Red Bear cast it upon the flames.

As they flared up they made the immediate circle in which they were standing as light as day.

Perhaps, in her distress, Miona's remarkable beauty was increased, for when the young chief turned his dark eyes upon her, there was no anger and nothing but love in his expression, and with something like sadness in his voice, he asked:

"Why did the Queen of the Woods fly from me?"

"She wished to go to her own home and kindred."

"Her home is with the Blackfeet, and none of her kindred can love her as they do."

"But Miona is white and they are red; they are of different races and cannot consort together."

"Love knows no race nor color," was the rather poetic expression of the dusky lover, who certainly did not intend that he should be argued out of the position he had assumed.

"Woo-wol-na promised that when five sum-

mers had come and gone, I should be sent to my people. Has Woo-wol-na two tongues?"

"Red Bear made no such promise," was the sullen reply of the Blackfoot. "It is Red Bear that claims the Queen."

"But he does the Queen a great wrong; she has spent many years with the Blackfeet; they have treated her kindly, and she loves them; but her heart is with her father and mother, who are waiting her coming."

"Let them come to the Queen," replied the warrior; "they shall be given the chief's lodge, they shall sleep upon the finest furs, and shall eat the fattest buffalo; they shall be welcome for all the moons they wish to stay, because they are the friends of the Blackfoot Queen."

Miona had no hope or thought of gaining a concession from her captor, but she was seeking merely to gain time. There was a faint stir of hope again when she found no other Indians near the fire. Surely Nick Whiffles and her lover must speedily miss her and institute a search, and she believed the sagacity of the trapper ought to be sufficient to direct him to the right spot.

The absence of the Blackfeet was as inexplicable as that of her friends. She knew that the wood was swarming with the dusky foes, and how it was that they still remained away was certainly singular, to say the least.

She was not aware that this was only one of a number of fires, kindled here and there in the valley for the purpose of distracting the fugitives and preventing their escape over the ridge.

Red Bear showed the same deference toward her that had characterized him during the years past. He evidently regretted the outbreak of which he had been guilty at the deserted village, and which he was certain had hastened the flight of the girl, and caused the aversion with which she seemed to regard him.

Having recovered possession of her again, he was now anxious to undo this mischief and to restore himself to his original place in her esteem.

Both were standing near the fire; he had his arms folded, in the stoical, indifferent manner of the Indian warrior, while his swarthy face, and his dark eyes that scarcely ever wandered from hers, were lit up with an expression of undisguised admiration and love.

Surely no Indian had ever coveted maid as he coveted her; surely never had the earth seen such a flower bloom as she at his side; surely she was worth any sacrifice or danger that he could offer.

Miona stood with her blanket gathered about her, her long, dark, Indian-like tresses hanging over her shoulders, her face downcast, as she looked gloomily into the fire, answering his questions and making her remarks with the dreamy indifference of one who is unconscious of what she is saying.

"When will Red Bear take the Queen of the Woods back to his village?"

"Now," was the instant reply of the Indian, his eyes flashing up at the thought of her concession.

"But the way is long, and Miona is weary."

"She can sleep in the canoe of Red Bear; he will spread his blanket for her, and while he paddles, she can sleep."

"The way is long to the water where his canoe is lying; she would rest here until daylight comes, and then go with him."

The black eyes of the Indian flashed, for he understood on the instant what this request meant. She wished to tarry here by the camp-fire until her friends could come to her rescue again.

He glanced furtively about in the gloom, as if to make sure that no form was stealing upon him, and then, stopping close to the girl, asked, in a hurried undertone:

"Does the Queen look for the coming of her friends? She may turn her eyes away, for they will never come again!"

"What!" gasped Miona; "are they dead?"

"They sleep in the ground," replied Red Bear, intending to give a poetical phrase to the deliberate falsehood he was telling.

"Oh! how can I bear this?" wailed the poor, stricken captive, pressing her hands to her forehead, as if to keep her head from bursting.

She believed the monstrous deception, for it accounted for the continued absence of her friends. She was certain that no other cause could explain their failure to return to her.

Very naturally, when she awoke in the wood, it seemed to her that she had been sleeping for a much longer time than was really the case. She was confident that three or four hours had passed since she closed her eyes in slumber, and while she sat unconscious on the ground the two men who had risked all for her had met their doom.

Red Bear saw that his deceit had done its work, and with a sort of chivalry difficult to understand, he maintained a respectful silence until she could recover, in a measure, from this great woe that had come upon her.

There were no tears and no more lamentations upon the part of Miona. A sort of dull stupor appeared to possess her. There was one sharp, agonizing pang when the Blackfoot pronounced the terrible words, and then the same stolid despair came back to her. The bright flower of hope that she had cherished was withered and dead, and no tidings could deepen her miserable condition.

Some five, ten, fifteen minutes passed, and still the two figures stood silent and motionless by the lonely camp-fire. Miona was in that dull, unnatural state, hardly conscious of where she was, while her companion was all alert, constantly turning his head and looking about him, as though he was not entirely free from personal fear.

"Will the Queen go with Red Bear?" finally ventured the Indian, in the hope of breaking the oppressive spell that was resting upon her. "Not yet—not yet," she answered, waving her head sadly from side to side. She was pale, but calm, and turning her face upon him, she asked in a voice which, while it sounded like that of another person, was still without the least trace of emotion.

"Where are all the warriors of Red Bear?"

He pointed to the south.

"Yonder is kindled the camp-fire of the Blackfeet, and there the warriors are gathered."

"Are they all there?"

"There are some hunting through the wood for the pale-faces."

Again was there a painful flicker of hope in the heart of Miona, and she asked, with an eager quickness:

"Why do you hunt for the pale-faces if they are dead?"

The question was so quick and unexpected that the wily red-skin was nonplussed for the moment. He recovered quickly, and answered:

"Al! do not know it; those who have not heard of it, are still searching the woods for them."

Ah! that one single second of hesitation undid Miona; she knew Red Bear had told a falsehood, and her friends were still living.

Still Miona, as far as possible, concealed her

discovery from her captor. She was resolved to delay their going by every means in her power; so she resorted to several trivial questions, finally asking:

"Do we return alone, or with the warriors of Woo-wol-na?"

"We shall go back together—sh!" he added, turning his head as quick as lightning.

As he did so, the figure of Ned Mackintosh came out of the gloom, and stood before him with his revolver in hand.

"Attempt to raise your gun and you're a dead dog!" muttered the young scout, raising his hand. "If he don't understand that, Miona, please translate it for him."

Whether he understood it or not, cannot be said, but forgetting all in the one thought of self-preservation, he whirled on his feet to flee, when he found himself face to face with Nick Whiffles!

"Hold on a minute, Red Bear," said the trapper, "there's a condemned little difficulty a-tween us that had better be settled now!"

CHAPTER XVI.

OVER THERE!

"CALAMITY," said Nick Whiffles, addressing his dog, "jest keep watch, and ef you smell any of the varmints comin', let us know in time to slope."

Thus assured that there was no danger of surprise, the trapper gave his attention to the case before him.

Red Bear was standing with his arms folded, his gun leaning against the nearest tree, fairly cornered, but still defiant and ready to die the death that was certain was only delayed for a few minutes. Ned Mackintosh held his pistol so as to cover the red-skin, and to anticipate any movement he might make.

Nick stood silent a moment, and then turning to Mackintosh, said, in a low, rapid voice: "I have told you what to do, lad; take the gal and do it."

The young man motioned to the girl to approach, and with one bound she sprang across the intervening space. Taking her by the arm, the two turned their backs upon the motionless figures, and at a rapid walk disappeared in the wood.

"Red Bear," said Nick, "I want you to stop chasing that gal; she don't belong to you, and I'll be condemned if you shall follow her."

He made no reply—sullen, stoical and defiant as ever, and Nick began to lose patience.

"I've got ye in my power, and it wouldn't take much for me to send you under and raise your ha'r, but I don't want to do it, on account of your father, fur me and him went on the war-path together afore you were born, and we allers took a sort of hankerin' fur each other."

Red Bear now raised his gaze and showed by his manner that he felt some interest in what was said.

"Sarcumstances have made me run summat agin' Woo-wol-na durin' the last few years, and I don't suppose he'll look over the part I've played; but it's all the same to me whether he does or don't. We've had a purty hard job of it, Red Bear, to keep out of your way, and I come mighty near gettin' ahead of us, but I think we've sarcumvented you at last. Don't you think so?"

The Indian answered by darting a quick glance around in the woods, the meaning of which was apparent to the trapper.

"You needn't expect that any of them are goin' to help you. My pup is on the watch, and he'll let me know soon enough to keep out of the way of the Blackfeet."

It may be said here that it was through the assistance of Calamity that Nick and Ned had finally discovered Miona. First making sure of her rescue, they then hastily agreed upon the plan of action.

The trapper directed that they should approach simultaneously from opposite directions, and Ned should take the girl in charge and start in as direct a line as possible for the northern ridge, passing on over that until he reached the stream upon the opposite side, where he was to await the coming of Whiffles.

The latter, with the assistance of his dog, had no doubt but that he could easily discover them. His great purpose was to get them out of this dangerous valley as speedily as possible, and at the same time to place them beyond any likelihood of being overtaken by the Indians, who, as a matter of course, would not relinquish the hunt so long as there was any prospect of success.

Nine mountaineers out of ten would have put Red Bear to death the instant they gained the opportunity; but Nick Whiffles, although of a terrible nature when aroused, was not vindictive. To him the crime would have been nothing but murder, and he had no thought of injuring any one except in case of inevitable necessity.

His object now was to gain time; he wished to give the lovers all the start possible, and for that reason he was remaining by the camp-fire to prevent Red Bear dashing away for assistance, or calling his comrades to his aid.

In doing this, it will be seen that Nick incurred great personal risk, which, however, was characteristic of him. Despite the vigilance of Calamity, some treacherous red-skin might steal near enough to give a fatal shot. In the gloomy depths of the woods lurked the most daring of red-skins, who were willing to risk their lives at any time for the sake of their leader, or that they might secure revenge upon a race for whom they entertained an hereditary hatred.

All this, as I have said, Nick Whiffles understood perfectly, but it produced no drawing back or hesitation in the part he had marked out for himself.

The position taken by the trapper was such that it placed him as near the rifle of Red Bear as was the latter. This, although apparently done by accident, was for the purpose of preventing the Indian taking any sudden advantage of the weapon. At the same time Nick kept his eye upon him, ready to detect and frustrate any movement looking toward escape.

As their relative positions were a little embarrassing, Nick naturally indulged his habit of talking when an opportunity occurred.

"The gal made a regular bargain with you, Red Bear, or with Woo-wol-na, which is the same thing, that when five years come round she should have the right, and why, in thunder, don't you stick to your bargain?"

"Red Bear loves the Queen of the Woods," replied the warrior.

"Wal, I don't s'pose she can help that, and so you shouldn't blame her fur that; but you don't love her half as much as that young chap that's walked off with her."

This, of course, was uttered in the Blackfoot tongue, and the Indian comprehended it. It was touching him in his tenderest spot, and his black eyes gleamed with an evil light as he turned upon the trapper.

The fire of jealousy was burning in his dark nature, and some threat was struggling to his tongue; but he repressed it, and the words he would have spoken were not uttered, and he looked down in the fire before him.

"Speak, Red Bear, if you have anything to say," said Nick, who understood the movement, and wished to encourage him.

But the Indian maintained silence.

"You needn't get ready to sing your death-song, 'cause I ain't going to hurt you, that is as long as you behave yourself—mighty! no—what would I want to hurt a poor red scamp like you for?"

"The words of my brother are the words of a coward," replied Red Bear, turning defiantly upon him. "Let him lay down his gun and meet me with his knife."

"Nobody is afraid of ye, Red Bear," replied Nick, not disconcerted in the least. "I've raised the hair of bigger Indians than you, but what's the use? I won't feel any better for wipin' you out, and you hain't got any chance to wipe me out."

At this juncture Calamity bounded into view, and his appearance meant that danger threatened, that it was time for him to be on the move.

Stooping down, Nick caught up the rifle of the Indian, and said:

"I'll leave it out here, where you can find it at daylight agin'; but you see I don't care 'bout gettin' hit in the back. Good-by, Red Bear."

As he was passing out of the circle of light on the other side of the clearing, the trapper looked back, and saw the infuriated Blackfoot with his tomahawk raised over his head. The next instant it had left his hand. As Nick sprang to one side it whizzed past him, almost grazing his shoulder.

At the same moment Red Bear gave utterance to a whoop, intended to draw his warriors about him, and Nick concluded it was time for him to make tracks; and so he did, plunging into the woods and running with the speed of a deer.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 295.)

"THROW PHYSIO TO THE DOGS; I'LL NONE OF IT."

We do not in the least feel like blaming Macbeth for this expression of disgust; indeed, we are rather inclined to sympathize with him. Even nowadays most of the people who go to the public are great, repulsive-looking pills, the very appearance of which is sufficient to "turn one's stomach." Had Macbeth ever taken Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Purgative Pellets he would not have uttered those words of contempt. It is really encouraging, when one is ill, to find that a little, sugar-coated Pellet, no larger than a grain of mustard, will as promptly produce the desired effect as a dose of great, nauseating pills. These little Pellets, unlike other cathartics, are really nature's physic. They do not deplete, but tone and invigorate the system. No family should be without Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Purgative Pellets.

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50—FINELY

A DINNER.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

At that unpleasant meal
I shall forever growl;
The fowl were hardly fair;
The fare was rather foul.

It seemed that every dish
Was opposite, and wrong;
The tea was very weak;
The butter very strong.

Unto the hungry soul
Good victuals are a charm;
The soup was very cold,
The water very warm.

And here upon my word
I'm telling you the truth;
The cheese had too much age,
The wine had too much youth.

The toast was burned too much—
Or rather not enough;
The cups were very frail,
The pie-crust very tough.

I thought for such a meal
I wouldn't give a pin;
The flies were very thick,
The milk was very thin.

I thought, "Why should a man
Come here to dine or sup?"
The meat would not go down,
The jelly wanted up.

The landlord's smiles polite
Could have no soothing power;
The vinegar was sweet,
The honey very sour.

I rather thought the host
For guests had no regard;
The pickles were very soft,
The bread was very hard.

It somehow seemed to me
The dinner was a farce;
The plates were plenty there,
The victuals very scarce.

To relish what I ate
Was little use to try;
The cake was very damp,
The pudding very dry.

To make things give all round,
I found the landlord's charge
For satisfaction small,
Was oppositely large.

Two Sides of a Story.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

MR. RUFUS KINGMAN looked suspiciously in Fred's face, as he folded up the letter he had been reading, and handed it back to the young man.

"It's a nice letter, Frederic, and the young lady is certainly very kind, and seems to think a great deal of you—and me. Mind, I say seems to think a great deal. But my experience has taught me that women, especially pretty women, are profound enigmas. You never can tell much about them."

"But I think you'll find Pansy an exception to the rule you have formed. At all events, accept the invitation she has sent you and aunt Ruthie, and see for yourself if she isn't the dearest girl in Christendom, and just the one above all others you would select for my wife."

Uncle Rufus shook his head undecidedly. "I don't know about it, Frederic. I'm not much of a hand to mix in with fashionable people, and I feel as if I even disliked the name of the girl. 'Pansy!' It's ridiculous—don't you think so, Ruth?"

Miss Kingman looked up from her knitting—a placid-faced, blue-eyed old lady, twenty years older than her forty-year-old brother, to whom she was mother, sister, friend, house-keeper.

"I rather like the name, Rufus; it is sweet and girlish. Besides, you know what a favorite flower of mine the pansy is. She ought to have great violet eyes, Fred?—looking as beamingly over her gold-rimmed glasses at the handsome young fellow who had known no other home than theirs since he was a baby—'just like the velvet leaves of my jump-up-Johnnies down by the corner fence.'"

Fred gave a happy, grateful glance for the little, tender romance in aunt Ruth's answer; then said ardently:

"She has, auntie, glorious blue eyes, with lashes and hair the very color of corn silk, and a complexion like a rose-leaf. You'll love her, auntie. Coax uncle Rufus to go. Pansy and Cornelia will see that you have a grand time."

The soft, blue eyes beamed at the refractory uncle this time, who sat knitting his handsome brow as if pretty women were entirely out of his line—and he, only forty, and finer looking, even, with clear, florid face, thick gray hair, and bright blue eyes, the very hue of Fred's own—than Fred himself, for all that young gentleman's universally admitted attractions.

"A fortnight will not be very long to be away from home, Rufus, and I think we should acknowledge the courtesy by accepting the invitation of this dear girl who has made our boy so happy. It need not be a fashionable visit—they are just two young girls who keep house together, ar'n't they, Fred?"

Fred was eager enough to indorse aunt Ruth's opinion.

"That is all. Cornelia is several years older than Pansy, and she is housekeeper. It's a charming house, well ordered, and I know you'll be glad if you go."

Uncle Rufus gave a lugubrious sigh. "So far as I can see, the whole thing has been settled before I was consulted. Well, I will take Ruth down on Wednesday, just to gratify you both. No good can come of it to me, you know—unless I find my conviction true, that this girl has simply bewitched you, without caring two pins for you."

Fred laughed—he knew so much better than that; and aunt Ruth's needles clicked faster for a moment.

"As if any girl could care so little for our Fred!"

And then they all went out to tea.

"Well, Pansy, dear, Mr. Kingman and Miss Ruth have been here a fortnight; now, tell me how you like Fred's folks?"

It was the sweetest, most womanly of voices, and as Cornelia Sumner asked it of the girl crouching so gracefully over the register—radiant in a dainty, pink morning-wrapper—her own cheeks flushed just a trifle—enough to add a new charm to her pale olive face, with its black eyes and lashes, its sensitive, scarlet-tipped mouth.

She was a regal sort of girl, who maintained a dignity and comparative reticence to every one, excepting little Pansy, and who, therefore, had acquired the reputation of heartlessness and hauteur. But, away down in her heart, Cornelia knew her twenty-seven years of maidenhood had not spoiled a natural affection and capacity for love—because no one yet had asked her for that love whom she considered favorably. But, of late, something had "come over" Cornelia—at least Pansy had laughingly told her so, more than once, or twice.

"You needn't deny it, my deuchess! I knew when Hal Thornehurst came back from Eu-

rope, your citadel wouldn't stand the storming! Don't I know! I am just as positive as if I had heard you say so. That magnificent Hal has been the prince to arouse my sleeping beauty."

Then Cornelia, so strangely for her, would flush slightly, perhaps laugh, but never denied it; while Pansy went on castle building about when her Fred and Cornelia's Hal would be brothers-in-law.

But this morning, sitting in a charming little boudoir, in the second story, just over the back parlor, the topic of conversation was not Hal Thornehurst, but their guests.

As Cornelia said, the Kingmans had been there two weeks—time enough to have cemented a loving attachment between aunt Ruth and the two girls; while as for uncle Rufus—well, he stoutly insisted that Pansy was to his gentle, placid sister, that of the two, he was astounded that Fred hadn't chosen Cornelia. Such a housekeeper! such a thorough-going woman! such a queenly, confident air as she had! Pansy was all right enough—always barring her heathenish name; but Fred would find a good dinner more desirable in the long run, than the filmy crotchets and worsted afghans that seemed to be Pansy's only acquirement. But, of course Mr. Rufus Kingman did not know much about it, except what he saw; besides, there was naturally more good common sense, and less romance in a gentleman of over forty, who was not, and never had been in love, than in an ardent young fellow like Fred, head over heels in love with the velvety blue eyes, and dimpled rose leaf cheeks of Pansy Sumner.

Of Cornelia's irreproachable dinners, uncle Rufus had enjoyed ample proof, as well as of numberless other hospilities, so that their visit had been a most delightful one. Opera—though aunt Ruth was a little shocked—sleight in the Park; two receptions at the elegant little house, upon both of which occasions Fred was on hand; and uncle Rufus was heard to say, "what a fop young Thornehurst was. Miss Cornelia's lover, wasn't he?" Delightful matinees, promenades, concerts; and now at the end of a fortnight of real pleasure, Cornelia put her question of womanly curiosity to Pansy—crouching over the register.

While, in the parlor below, his arm-chair drawn near that register, the morning *Herald* in his hands, Mr. Rufus Kingman sat, and heard every word, from that first question he had asked.

"How do I like them? Why, I think auntie Ruth is the dearest old lady I ever saw—such a sweet, caressing way with her, and she does love Fred so."

Cornelia laughed. "Which is grand recommendation in your opinion, I dare say. But, Pansy—a brief pause, then, uncle Rufus imagined her voice was constrained and unnatural as she went on.

"Speaking of Fred, naturally leaves me to think of your approaching marriage, dear; and that, necessarily, of your engagements—which has worried me some of late. I really think, Pansy, the time has come for you to decide which of the two gentlemen you will have."

Uncle Rufus sat upright in his chair, every nerve alert. So, this pretty little Pansy had two lovers, had she—the mixt?

"Now, Cornelia, you're going to scold. I know it! As if I knew which one I wanted—or cared, for that matter, which one I had."

"That may be true enough, but at the same time, imprudent. Indeed, I regret very much that you were so childish as to engage yourself to them both. There's sure to be a fuss."

Uncle Rufus got out of his chair, in hot indignation at the condition of affairs in that house. "I'd leave it this minute, were it not some extension of Pansy's wickedness, that Miss Cornelia so disapproves it. The girl is headstrong and of course her sister is not to blame. But—what a mess!"

He heard Pansy's sweet, girlish voice again, and listened, more horror-stricken than ever.

"It lays between Warner and Frederic, of course, and as the wedding day is so near, I think I had better decide, as you say. Frederic is good enough, and he's been faithful in the past—but then I think Warner is the most elegant—the more stylish, don't you? I decidedly prefer Warner, and I shall dismiss the other at once. By the way, Cornelia, isn't Miss Hugh to come at eleven to take the measure for my dresses?"

Then, as the conversation rambled off into dressmaking gossip, uncle Rufus strode away—burning with anger, shame, and wounded feeling; his face flushed, his eyes flashing the righteous indignation he felt.

"So that's the little game, is it? that is the way they're intending to serve my nephew! Well, I won't blame Miss Cornelia, but didn't I always say no good could come of a girl with such a name as Pansy? Poor Fred—Frederic! and he repeated the name aloud, in contemptuous copy of Pansy's unresented formality. Then, he rushed out of the parlor.

"I'll tell Ruth, and we'll pack our portmanteau and leave the house. Engaged to two men at once! thank God I'm not a marrying man!"

But he couldn't find Ruth. So, he jammed his hat on his head, and went out for a walk, until she returned to her room.

Two minutes after he had closed the front door after him, aunt Ruth entered the parlor, calm, placid, all unconscious of the storm brewing, and took the same chair uncle Rufus had vacated, surprised, in a moment or so, to hear distant voices in conversation above her.

"You gave no opinion of Mr. Kingman, Pansy, after you told me how dearly you loved aunt Ruth."

Naturally, when the train stopped for breakfast, which it did with the usual consistency of express trains at about eleven-twenty-five, the good doctor, being seated directly behind Miss Tabitha, with old-fashioned politeness (so called because never seen in the younger generations), offered to help her out; and when she declined, but signified her longing for a "good cup of tea," he went and got it for her. Yet he need hardly have felt called upon to bring her a bit of fried chicken also, and when she coyly invited him to sit down and partake of her humble lunch, to accept the invitation. A little later, however, much to the annoyance of their common enemy and to the evident disappointment of the lady, he returned to his own seat and buried himself in his book.

"If we could only come to a tunnel," sighed young Bunting, softly, and when the conductor came along, presently, he asked:

"Are there any tunnels on this road?"

"Yes, a long one just this side of D—"

"And we get there?"

"At one forty-five."

"How long will we be going through?"

"Four minutes," and the official, thinking he had answered questions enough, hurried on,

and he listened, with strange thrills of happiness at his heart. Cornelia loved him—him! For a moment he forgot the news he had for aunt Ruth; and just then, Pansy and Cornelia came into the parlor—Pansy all eagerness and animation.

"Oh, here they are now! I want you to take my part, auntie and uncle, because cross old Corrie is scolding me horribly because I engaged two florists to decorate for my wedding! Tell her it won't hurt, aunt Ruth! I know Frederic won't care because I prefer Warner; that old Frederic is getting behind time, and Warner is splendid, especially with tables! Confess now, Cornelia!"

Mr. Kingman listened with awe-struck ears. It wasn't two lovers then, but two florists. Miss Pansy had been "engaged to?" What a fool he was—what a consummate idiot—no, what a happy man he was, if it was true Cornelia really loved him.

Twenty-four hours later, he knew it was true; and when a double wedding was celebrated, both Frederic and Warner officiated.

And ever afterward, Mr. Rufus Kingman insisted that there are two sides to every story.

Vengeance in a Tunnel.

BY HENRI MONTCALM.

THE Rev. Ahasuerus Asterisk, DD., LL.D., who, I suppose, has as good a right as anybody to be considered the hero of this story, at the precise moment when the narrative opens, was being projected through the air feet foremost, in state of unconsciousness, at the rate of fifty miles an hour, or thereabouts. It may occur to the reader to complain that this is rather a sensational way of introducing one's hero; but it isn't. The reverend gentleman was only traveling in a sleeping-car.

Just above him was a person, Jack Bunting by name, a mere schoolboy, but as desperate a young fellow as you could well wish to see, who, with a pertinacity and cunning worthy a better cause, had dogged the reverend doctor from the little country village which was their common home to New York, and thence on board the sleeping coach "City of Smoke" (so called because, three times per week, it ran through a certain city in the Alleghenies.) The reason of this rather uncalculated devotion on the part of the young man was a grudge he fancied he owed Doctor Asterisk, and a determination to wreak his vengeance upon him in some horrible manner not yet fully decided upon. The doctor had, innocently enough, by a move from each other, as the good doctor enthusiastically musing beneath him and the innocent lady sweetly slumbering in lower berth number four. Yet connect them he did and in such a manner that there was gradually evolved from such a connection an idea quite worthy in point of diabolical ingenuity the conceptions of Mr. Bunting's most wakeful moments. This idea, briefly stated, was that these two were made expressly for each other, and Mr. B. was a third party created with special reference to acquainting them with the fact. In short, the young man, believing on general principles that he should find a willing accomplice in the lady herself (whose name, by the way, was Miss Tabitha Tarleton), had determined to force the doctor to propose to her. This determination arrived at, the malicious young matchmaker, not troubling himself as to the *how* of the matter at all, beginning to grow drowsy, raised himself a moment to make sure his valuables were still under his pillow, then fell back senseless into the arms of all-subsiding Somnus.

The next morning, descending from his "lofty couch," the young man encountered some difficulty in climbing over the doctor, who sat on the edge of his berth distractedly ransacking his vest-pocket in search of a button-hook that wasn't there. Unable to find it, he appealed to Mr. Bunting. Mr. Bunting regretted that he did not wear button boots, and consequently did not carry the desired article, but artfully suggested the possibility of the lady in number four possessing one. The doctor looked doubtful a moment; then he hastily put on his coat, advanced toward the lady, who was likewise just completing her toilet, and blushing stated his need. She looked at him rather wildly for an instant, then began fumbling nervously at her back hair, and presently brought forth—a hairpin.

"I have no button-hook," she said, with an angelic smile, "but maybe you can make this do."

"I can try, at least," answered the doctor, cheerfully; and with profuse expressions of obligation, he returned to his seat and with some difficulty succeeded in getting his shoes buttoned. This task accomplished, very much to his own shame but greatly to the delight of Mr. Bunting, the doctor glanced up cautiously to make sure Miss Tarleton was not looking, then drew forth his pocket-book and carefully put away the borrowed article therein.

Naturally, when the train stopped for breakfast, which it did with the usual consistency of express trains at about eleven-twenty-five, the good doctor, being seated directly behind Miss Tabitha, with old-fashioned politeness (so called because never seen in the younger generations), offered to help her out; and when she declined, but signified her longing for a "good cup of tea," he went and got it for her. Yet he need hardly have felt called upon to bring her a bit of fried chicken also, and when she coyly invited him to sit down and partake of her humble lunch, to accept the invitation. A little later, however, much to the annoyance of their common enemy and to the evident disappointment of the lady, he returned to his own seat and buried himself in his book.

"If we could only come to a tunnel," sighed young Bunting, softly, and when the conductor came along, presently, he asked:

"Are there any tunnels on this road?"

"Yes, a long one just this side of D—"

"And we get there?"

"At one forty-five."

"How long will we be going through?"

"Four minutes," and the official, thinking he had answered questions enough, hurried on,

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while the young man returned to the end of the car to perfect his nefarious schemes.

On they rushed with the speed of the wind. Fifteen minutes more and they would enter the tunnel. Mr. Bunting calmly surveyed the field, carefully counted and recounted the seats between him and Miss Tarleton, and bided his time. Five minutes more, now. On and on and on they go, and then, all in an instant, with a great shriek of despairing agony, the locomotive plunged headlong into the depths of the mountain caverns, dragging after it the unresisting train. Now is the time for deeds of darkness. Fate, which seems strangely to favor the wicked, has suddenly turned day into night, and the victims are seated, startled and helpless, within the avenger's grasp. Stealthily and swiftly he glides along the aisle, with fearful precision notes each compartment as he passes it; a moment he pauses beside the unsuspecting fair one, hovering above like some spirit of the dark, unseen and unseeing—and then, certain of his prey, with one fell swoop, he quickly, cruelly darts upon her and imprisons upon her startled cheek—a kiss. Not a loud, sounding smack, but a soft caress, gentle and tender as the touch of a springtime zephyr.

A moment more, and with another wailing shriek, the great train flashed out into the light again, and the passengers utter in concert a sigh of relief, and resume their reading—all except Miss Tabitha Tarleton. Her sigh is rather one of ecstasy than relief, as she beams upon the innocent doctor a glance, half shy, half inviting, seeming to say, "Oh, you naughty man, how could you?" and the doctor, a little puzzled, answers her look with an assuring smile, and returns to his magazine, thinking all the while to himself what pleasant companions one does meet traveling in parlor coaches.

Time passed on; the train gradually made its way westward, but matters generally did not seem to progress much. Four o'clock, P. M., found the doctor with drowsy lids, nodding and yawning profoundly at the back of Miss Tarleton's head. That lady, though not entirely recovered from the exaltation of spirits brought about by the kiss she believed him to have given her, was yet a trifle heart sick with hope deferred, and was sulkily studying the landscape that was flashing by. As for our younger hero, he still kept up his observations from the rear end of the car, growing more and more anxious as he realized that in a few hours more it would be bedtime, and that in the morning they would all separate at Chicago. The occasion plainly called for action; and what was to be done? He saw no way of bringing the old gentleman to his knees in the brief time that remained. But he had done the doctor's kissing for him, why should he not do his proposing also? But how? It would hardly do to go to the lady and say that he came in behalf of Doctor Asterisk, to make offer of that gentleman's old-fashioned heart and hand, and to sue for her own in exchange.

The consequence might prove serious to the self-delegated proxy, should she turn to the doctor in person with her acceptance. What then should he do? This problem occupied the young man's mind until supper-time, when the inspiration of a strong cup of coffee put the solution into his head. The proposal could be made in writing! No sooner said than done; and a few moments' thought produced the following note, which was handed to the gentleman sitting just behind the doctor, with the request that it be passed to the lady:

DEAR MADAM:—I'm a practical man. I make up my mind in a moment and don't change it in a moment. You, I don't know you, but I would like to. What is more, I want you to marry me. I know you are divine, therefore I adore you. Forgive me my little indiscretion at one-forty-five. Upon my word and honor as a Doctor of Divinity, I couldn't help it. I'll take it back if you insist upon it. You already possess my heart—will you take along with it a name not altogether unknown to fame and hereunto subscribed. I have the honor to be, dear madam,

Your sincere admirer,
AHASUERUS ASTERISK.

If this letter should appear to any intelligent reader to be not exactly what a grave and reverend lover would have written under the circumstances, let him call to mind the fact that the grave and reverend lover didn't write it. Such as it was, it was handed to the gentleman aforesaid, who gave it to the doctor, with, "Will you be kind enough to pass this to the lady in front of you?" The doctor took it absently, then leaned over, reverently touched Miss Tarleton's shoulder, and presented it with his most seductive smile. She took it with a radiant blush, as though aware he could have but one thing to say to her on paper. Then she turned to the fading light and began spelling it out. To say that she was not somewhat surprised with such an offer actually before her, would be to say what was not true; but we may safely affirm that she was not displeased. She knew the doctor by reputation as an eccentric and warm-hearted man, and she was by no means disposed to refuse the honor he now extended. Having finished the note, she turned to her supposed lover. He was gazing dreamily out of the window. So she spoke to him.

"Doctor," she called, softly, and then smiled in so captivating a manner that he could not resist getting up and seating himself beside her, saying, "Madam, I am your most humble servant."

"Do you really mean what you say?" she inquired, archly.

"Madam, I never mean less than I say," he replied, thinking she alluded to his remark.

"Then my answer is, yes!" whispered the delighted lady, and without the slightest warning there stole into his a little soft, shapely hand, while her head dropped trustfully upon his shoulder. Under such circumstances, the man who hesitates is lost beyond redemption. The doctor hesitated—more because he was completely thunderstruck and didn't know what else to do than anything else. Then he looked down into the happy little face, comely and fair in spite of the hard lines time had drawn across it; he saw a pair of lips which seemed to him ripe and luscious as a prize pipin, just within reach of his own, and, being thus mortal after all just like the rest of us, for the life of him he could not resist the temptation to bend down and kiss them.

What passed after this, our young friend, Jack Bunting, never really knew, for the remainder of the conversation was carried on in whispers; but evidently his plot had succeeded, and he climbed into his berth that night with feelings of the most profound satisfaction. And when the next morning he saw Doctor Asterisk escort Miss Tabitha Tarleton to a carriage, then get in after her, and order the man to drive up to the nearest clergyman, he went his own evil way, happy in the thought that at last his vengeance was fully accomplished. Yet, thus, in this world of ours, do we often defeat our own vile purposes. He had only, after all, joined together two loving hearts, and made the lonely old doctor a happy man for the rest of his life.

WISDOM no more consists in science than happiness is wealth.

LIGHT BEYOND.

BY D. G. MYERS.

What is it, oh, God, that freezes my blood,
And deadens the pulse of my heart?
What is it that makes me feel timid and queer,
As though from some horror I start?
Have I just awoke from some troubled dream,
Some vision as black as the night?
Oh, no, it can't be, for the sun in the sky
Is shining effulgent and bright.

But, where is the lily that bloomed in the vale
When the May-crown was crowned in her pride?
Where now the fair form I but yesterday saw
Bedecked in the robes of a bride?
There, there they lie buried in one common grave,
The beautiful, good and the fair,
But their beauty has flown, all haggard and pale,
In their dust-robes and ruin they stare.

'Tis the thought that I'm dying that fills me with fear,
And saddens and sickens my heart;
'Tis the thought that from the dear scenes of the earth
I must sooner or later depart.
Oh, the pall! oh, the blief! oh, the sad marble face!
Oh, the shroud! oh, the cold, chilling tomb!
How my poor heart is throbbing, how sadly depressed,
As it looks on the scenes of its doom!

But, hark! there's a whisper afloat on the breeze;
How consoling that voice to my ear!
'Tis the angel of Faith, and these are the words
That dispel all my sadness and fear:
'Look up, drooping heart! despair not in vain,
Though the shroud you shall certainly wear,
There's a Region of Light just beyond the dark grave,
There's a Realm of Peace bright and fair.

Josiah's Elopement.

BY LURA M'NALL.

"EYE OUT; leg broke. Roll on, Great Jehovah, roll on!" Such was the mournful refrain of a parrot who had been assailed, by some rude boys, and left in a crippled condition. Poor Poll's sad ditty was running through my mind as I knelt by a grate of dying embers, one fateful, gusty November night, remembering on the events of the last twenty-four hours. True, I wasn't quite as bad off as the bird, but then it wasn't the fault of a certain number ten boot, which being planted successfully against my back, sent me down two flights of stairs at a faster rate of speed than the lightning mail-train commands. It wasn't the fault of the boot, but it "needn't have been," if I hadn't been making love to my girl, and her father hadn't have come in and caught us just as she promised to be mine and threw her arms about my neck. I saw the old man just as he came in the door, and quoted for his benefit, "Sit down, old man, sit down and rest your weary limbs." You know in the poem of "Zekiel's Courting?"

"He stood a spell on one foot fust,
An' then he stood a spell on 'other,
An' on which one he put the wud,
He couldn't ha' told you neither."

But after making that observation I did not stand on ceremony, or anything else, but I just sat down at the bottom of those two flights of stairs in so sudden a manner that I didn't have time to be astonished, and all the inmates of that tenement house rushed forth and gazed at me; some screamed murder, others cried for the police, but I waited not for the guardian of the peace, but, rising, took to my heels, stopping only in my mad career at a drug store to procure several porous-plasters, which, when I arrived in my little back-attic, I applied to the parts affected, and that was the reason while repeating "Eye out; leg broke. Roll on, Great Jehovah, roll on!" that I knelt by my fire instead of sitting. Schemes of vengeance rolled through my mind. What a condition for a young man of my ability—a hatter, with a good salary—to be in. I could not be kicked with impunity; no, sir; no. At last I determined that I would elope with Susan (that was her name); I would bear her away in triumph almost before the old man's eyes. Wouldn't he foam at the mouth then, and he could kick at the wall till he wore his boots out, if he wanted to; I wouldn't care, for we (the lovely Susan and I) would be far away. Well, in the course of a week I had made all my arrangements, and communicated them to Susan by letter, and she had answered me back with the prettiest little notes. I was rather astonished, for I didn't think she could write so well. As the appointed time drew near, I did grow a little nervous and had bad dreams about boots, and the snarling of my wounds, although nearly healed, reminded me of past transactions. Susan's room was in the third story back, but a series of sheds and outbuildings made descent easy until within a few feet of the ground; this last difficulty was surmounted by bribing the cook to leave the step-ladder out and to loan me the key of the back-gate. We were to proceed through the alley to the street, where a carriage would be in waiting. I anticipated no little difficulty, for Susan was by no means seraphic in her dimensions, weighing somewhere near two hundred pounds, and I knew that fainting damsels have nearly always to be carried when they elope. The time fixed was twelve o'clock, and before proceeding, I encouraged myself with several glasses of wine. The key turned easily in the back-gate, but it was dark, a fit night for a dark deed, but too dark for comfort, and as I entered the yard, boldly, I fell over the slop-tub, which splashed ominously, and as I passed on the odor of defunct vegetables and soap-grease clung tenaciously to my new broadcloth. I waited at the foot of the ladder for nearly an hour; at last I hear a voice, which sounds a little strange, call in a hoarse whisper, "Josiah!" "Here I am, Susan," I cry in ecstasy. She comes, slowly and ponderously. At the foot of the ladder I catch her and half carry her along. It is fear which retards her movements, and I use all my strength to get her to the carriage, dragging and pulling her over the stony pavement, glancing at intervals cautiously behind me. No pursuit is made; we gain the carriage; I cry, all right; the driver cracks his whip; we are off. I attempt to remove Susan's veil, but she resists, and, half crying, whimpers, "Let me alone." She is frightened, poor thing, and I respect her feelings. She nestles in my arms, and soon she sleeps; she does more; she snores; who ever thought Susan would snore? No more sleep of nights for me; if I had but known it—but it is no use now, I cannot take her back. Just at daylight we reach the village and the country parsonage where we are to be made one. I awake Susan and endeavor to lift her over, but she reaches *terra firma* at last. She removes her veil! Am I dreaming? Has Susan grown such a beard? Alas, it is not Susan, but 'tis Susan's father! He gazes at me ironically, and says, "Young man, pay that hackman!" I tremblingly comply, after which he says, "Now, get out!" I do not hesitate, for I see a number ten boot raised, threateningly, but I go on.

I don't know how Susan's father discovered my plot; I never inquired, I am still fancy free, and give all girls with papas who have big feet a wide berth.